

ALONG THE  
Australia's magazine of the performing arts. January 1980 \$1.95\*

# Theatre Australia

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Administration - Inspiration  
or Encumbrance?

Nationwide reviews  
including film,  
opera, books;  
National guide.

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SUNNY  
SOUTH

THE FESTIVAL OF  
SYDNEY  
BY STEPHEN HALL



# A PREVIEW OF SOME 1980\* SHOWS!

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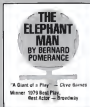
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\* MORE SHOWS TO BE ANNOUNCED.

# Theatre Australia

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# PUB THEATRE



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# COMMENT

This month's focus has to be on Sydney with Perth and Adelaide to get the focus with their festivals in February and March respectively. In the New South Wales metropolises not only are the annual city celebrations all set to get underway, but the Sydney Theatre Company begins its operations proper.

How appropriate that they should open on January 1st, not just New Year's Day, but the beginning of a new decade. How appropriate too, though and that such things are still worthy of attention, that their inaugural production should be an Australian classic.

Artistic Director Richard Wherrett has obviously put a great deal of thought into his choice. Both of personnel and plays. *The Sinner South*, for instance, is not only of indigenous interest, and perfectly appropriate to the holiday atmosphere generated by the time of year and the Festival, but is the first in a deliberate policy as conscious as it is necessary, to establish a repertoire of the Australian classics.

Local and overseas writing are now 50:50 (which must be a higher local content than any other state company) and the contemporary classic proportions are the same. New writing is being encouraged with, in the first season, our brightest young playwrights, Louis Nowra, translating *Cyrano de Bergerac* (itself an important move, to have found modern Australian versions of world classics — and giving an airing to his own right with the premiere of *The Provoked Woman*).

Other aims of the company are as standard writing: good theatre as low cost, relevance whatever the period the play was from, and overall to reflect our society in text, class, theatrical ornamentation that is "grand, vulgar, sublimely challenging and fun". That plays sums up the better productions at Nimrod, from whence, of course, Wherrett comes.

His purpose is to achieve all this with "a light flexible committed company" an aim which gives the considerable bureaucracy of the company's production will be important in the eyes of the profession. *The Old Time* was both dogmatised and hierarchical, the new emphasis is on interaction. To this end and out, is the administration far from go down the road of an ensemble of actors (but) has already been published and is to be enlarged to some twelve or fourteen in June.

Some of the best directors and designers in the country have been asked in to help with the 1980 season. Fisher, Opfer, Clark, Rodger, and Kristin Fredericksen, Ian Robertson and Stuart Gordon to name just some. John Gaden has been wooed from Nimrod to the appointment of first Associate Director to the Company.

One begins to miss at how the Nimrod as major rival will fare, lacking its main actor (who is also committed to a Limited Life Scheme venture with Ron Crawford) and having lost to Adelaide Paul (the who is known simply as the best administrator in the country. John Ball's name is already down as a guest actor for the Sydney Theatre Company too. Good government proverbially happens when the opposition is a good too.

The 1979 World Theatre Season proved that even the occasion most of the city companies can rise admirably as it. Standards have been set which will be hard to live up to and many of the "puppy loggers" will be looking for workalikes in the new set up. The challenges for Wherrett and his company are massive, but one way or another the Sydney Theatre Company will be the major hyphen in the ongoing development of drama in New South Wales in the new decade.

T4 wishes both Richard and the company every success.



Robert Page, Editor

## Theatre Australia

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# I N F O



**B**ully's House, in a few weeks Tom Keneally's latest play, *Bully's House*, will be going on at Nimrod, their first major production for the year, directed by Ken

Harler and designed by Michael Pearce.

The play is based on incidents that occurred in Armadale in the 1930's but telescoped into a shorter period and represents an

attempt by the elders of an aboriginal tribe to come to terms with white civilisation. Bully is one of the elders, whose house has been swept away by winds, and he believes that Wonga, the shunder man — and Chest will not allow him to rebuild until he has brought about a rapprochement between the two, between black and white, old and new.

Central to this is the ancient aboriginal custom of displaying the Ranga, the most precious tribal possession — to outsiders, and Bully persuades the elders to display it to the whites (represented by a missionary, a government official and an anthropologist). Keneally explains that "the tragedy of the situation, and of Bully himself, is that in return he expects a display of a white Ranga equivalent, he expects the white world to repay the honour with the

key to white civilisation, an the Ranga is the key to black culture — the magic link between myths and the past, and the present. The anthropologist is destroyed by the knowledge that he can't give what is required, and Bully by the elders for his wrong decision."

Unlike *The Chant of Jimmy Blacksmith*, there are no baddies in *Bully's House*, and Keneally sees it as a progression in his work. "I have a number of hopes for it. I hope it's well made, really the work of a craftsman. In the early '60s I had a typical novelist's attitude, that plays were easy to write because they were just novels without the purple passages, which are the hard parts. A frightful mistake to make! I hope this will at least be a critical success, I don't know about commercial, so that in future when people refer to me as a playwright I won't have to cringe."

**B**ig River, Alex Bawa's new play opens at the Adelaide Festival. An MTC production, it then goes to Melbourne, Canberra and Sydney. Speaking of it, Alex Bawa said "Despite its title, I think, with all possible objectivity, *Big River* is a play not a B movie. If I had called it *Little Creek* or *Tiny Brook* I think the expectations of the audience would have been lowered to the point of no return. So *Big River* it is.

The river is the boundless Murray, one of the most ambitious of waterways, which nearly links the Pacific and Indian oceans among all its other feats. In its day it was seen as the Life Force and at the very least the lifeblood of the people

who depended on it for transport and irrigation.

"Captain Hindmarsh, retired from the Navy and sent inland to explore the waterways. He bought a property outside Albury, brought up his family, and pioneered the taming of the big river. That invasion of a system of inland waterways so bring him to the Dead Heart was not shared by the colonial government and his understanding.

"The Captain dies in 1900, on the eve of Federation, and his children are left with twenty acres of vineyards, a large paddle steamer and a dream of progress. What can they do? How this second generation handles its position and how this reveals the influence of their pioneer father is the stuff of *Big*



Alex Bawa, author of *Big River*.

*River*.

"As I always preferred 'True Love Waits' to 'Love On', *Big River* is a romantic drama which features in the

cast. I'm pleased to see two students from Makaraar Reel, Sandy Goss and Liddy Clark."



Ken Brucher

**R**ep recapturing progression ... Recently-appointed Artistic Director of Canberra Rep, Ken Brucher, already has one production under his belt at Theatre 1. December sees William Goldacre's *Sterling Holmes*, a well-made melodrama based loosely on the Conan Doyle stories, packing them in and Brucher hopes to continue the success with the season announced for the first half of 1988.

"I thought it essential to do new or little-known pieces for a start. This partly reflects my interest in the needs and chances of dramatic history but more my conviction that Rep needs to recapture its progressive image and to develop a continuing commitment to new writing."

David Allen's *Joseph Conrad Goes Ashore* in

February/March will be followed by the Australian premier of Stephen Poliakoff's *Stranberry Fields*, a fascinating father-son play about the National Front, in April. A revival of Louis Evans's *Mother and Son* completes the season in May/June.

"I'm very pleased with the season," said Brucher. "Both the new plays will test the audience here in different ways and the Evans revival will I hope be a revelation of the riches right under our feet."

"We're already thinking ahead to the second half of the year, there are so many interesting pieces that Canberra has never seen, or not seen within living memory, that programming is unusually difficult. Only the most obviously commercial plays tour here (and not even all of those) so the field is wide open."

**V**ersatile Pamela Gibbons, singer, dancer and actress is back with the Ensemble Theatre playing in their production of David Hare's *Assault*, which runs through to mid February — or longer should they have another sell-out success like *Chapter Two*. Pamela actually trained at the Ensemble before her notable vocations in *A Chorus Line*, *The Doctor* on ABC and with Norman Ginniston.

Along with *Assault*, the Ensemble will be launched into the eighties with another Sydney Festival ended season of new playwrights at the Studio during January. As before, the Festival is assisting the Ensemble's Playreading Bureau to get some of their best scripts before the public. The first will be George Hutchinson's *No Room For Dreams*, about Sydney seceding William Chadley. It first saw the light of day at the 1977 Playwrights' Conference, and here will be directed by

Lex Marinos.

*TEF* is the name of the next piece, by new playwright John Minto and following *TEF* come two one-acters by Graeme Nixon, *Edward's Unfortunate Alliance* and *Forbidden Fruit*. These will be directed by Fred Summs who directed Nixon's previous two short plays which were in last year's Festival of Sydney Playwrights.

The final new play is the latest by John Summons, *The Sinner and the Rapist*, about Van Gogh, which Summons wrote while he was playwright in residence at the Ensemble (with the assistance of the Literature Board). His last play which was produced at the Ensemble in 1977 was *Lassie Of God* (Soon to be a J4 free playscript to subscribers.)

Although the company have been doing remarkably well in his absence, they are much looking forward to the return of Hayes Gordon after the final season of *Anner in Adelaide*.



Pamela Gibbons

# I N F O

**P**eter Barry Regismann's long-standing director, is trying his hand at some rather different entertainment this month. He has co-written and is producing and directing his own musical at Sydney's Bondi Pavilion Theatre. John Mulder is the composer-lyricist of the show, which is called *Songs Mr. Mother Didn't Teach Me*. It starts on January 22 for a limited season.

Exactly what one can expect is not being revealed at this stage; all the writers will say is that it could be described as a lighthearted musical biography. John Mulder will play his own compositions at the piano and the rest of the cast is made up of Liz Harris and Karen Johnson. Karen has just returned from a three-month study tour in the USA, and will also choreograph *Songs*.

Barry and Mulder say they "are gently confident that there has not been anything quite like this little musical to date." *Songs Mr. Mother Didn't Teach Me* obviously inspires confidence in others too, as it is being backed financially by the Elizabethan Theatre Trust.



Peter Barry

**J**udgement Hoopla is presenting the Australian premiere of the highly regarded and challenging play *Judgement* by Barry Collins as its first offering in 1980 in the 4 points theatre.

First performed at the Reginald old Vic with Peter

O'Toole, a production of the play was then mounted by Great Britain's National Theatre with Colin Blakely in the leading role.

The play is based on a true incident that occurred on the Russian front during the closing stages of World War II.

In the Hoopla production, Malcolm Robertson, who will be remembered for his highly praised solo performance in Chekhov's *Night Before the Old Man's Death* at the Playbox Theatre last year, plays the role of the Russian officer.



Wendy Bayden as Wendy Bond with Jason Green (the crocodile)

**P**eter's *A Boy* Robert Stupper's and Gary Von Eggmond's production of *Peter Pan* will shock traditionalists, instead of Peter being played by the usual principal girl, this production stars seventeen-year-old Hugh Mearns. Mearns started his acting career with the German Theatre in Sydney at the age of twelve and *Peter Pan* has given him a flying (literally) start to his professional career. The production was a sell-out success when it played at the

Regent in Sydney during the August school holidays and looks set to do the same when it opens on January 3 at the Comedy on Melbourne.

Sally Bayden who plays Wendy has been described as "Australia's newest and brightest young film star". She is just back from Hollywood where she starred in the *Jaws* series, and her next film, *Little Dragons* is due to be launched shortly, during the run of *Peter Pan*.

Robina Beard (popularly

known as Midge the manicurist) has devoted the show, drawing on her experience in many musical comedies. David Bradshaw is Captain Hook with Stan Kourou as the dog Nana. The two kids who play the children of Never-Never Land come from almost as many different countries appropriate when you note that J. M. Barrie left all the royalties of *Peter Pan* to London's Great Ormond Street Hospital for children.





Malcolm Blaylock

**N**ew Artistic Director of La Bonte, Malcolm Blaylock has recently moved to Queensland from South Australia. La Bonte is in the middle of a summer season which was programmed by outgoing director, Rick Billingham, but which includes in it a South Australian season of two plays, *How Fi How* by Stephen Noonday and *Notes on Our Season* by Doreen Clark (which will play in repertory in late February and early March). Blaylock says the S.A. plays are there by complete coincidence and not for the boys from his home state.

The first season he will have planned starts half way through this year and will include a large number of new Australian plays, and at least one new Queensland play. Works that are being considered at the moment are Dorothy Hewson's *Men From Midsummar*, Steven Sewell's *Tramons*, *Jock* by Jim McNeill, Clem Gorman's *Manual of French Mayjore* and plays

by David Allen. There is also the possibility of commissioning a work from a Queensland writer based on the Queensland political scene, that will happen either this year or next, depending on people and availability.

Malcolm Blaylock will be following the La Bonte policy of encouraging new and Australian plays, particularly ones which are "innovative and socially relevant, which look at issues of contemporary life and raise questions about the social and organisational ways in which we live."

He believes that La Bonte has its own niche in Brisbane theatre. "We are certainly not doing the same kind of plays as the QTC, in fact there is probably very little overlap in our audiences. Twelfth Night has perhaps not yet established exactly what it is doing, and there may be some overlap there for a bit, but I'm sure it will sort itself out. La Bonte knows exactly what it is doing and why and will not change."

**J**ohn Gaden has been appointed Associate Director of the Sydney Theatre Company. He muses: "Why did I ever agree to do it? I was very happy being an actor. I could give my single-minded attention to the play, the part I was doing. I could work obsessively on one thing I did my homework, went to rehearsals, blamed others if I went wrong, complained about standards, conditions, money, my health, fellow actors, worked hard and enjoyed every minute of it."

"Why change such an agreeable state of things?"

"I suppose it's because there's a chance to do something about the things that have often worried me and a fascination to see if the 'ideals' can work. I want to be part of a company that will be exciting, relevant, innovative and committed. I want it to be a place where actors of all ages and experience can work with a real sense of their creativity, learn and grow. I want to see funds going fast and foremost to the creative

people in the theatre. I want to see a theatre using as much Australian material as possible, not in a parochial way, but to flourish our writers and work confidently. I want a company that is continually experimenting and working with new forms. I want a company that is prepared to rediscover the old forms and the real values of our best traditions."

"Those ideals are all very well. The problem was to keep those principles uppermost under the pressure of running a company. Sometimes, it's hard enough to remember that you are there to put on plays, let alone in the best possible way with the highest possible standards. There are days when the sheer weight of administration seems to be what it's all about. But on the good days, when you seem to be getting somewhere near the ideals, it's very exciting and there seems a real possibility that we will be able to give our public the kind of theatre that we hope will give them joy and enrich their lives."



John Gaden

# LETTERS

## SITE OMISSIONS

Dear Sir

Steven Malt's notice of our Company's production of *Oh What A Lovely War: Male!* has not surprising omission and since part of Theatre Australia's brief is surely to be a record of the present for the future, I would like to point out what Malt neglected to mention.

She referred to the production as an adaptation, which indeed it is, but I think she should have made clear the scale and extent of the adaptation. Colin George wanted to give prominence to Australia's part in the Great War, and consequently we included five new scenes and revised all most others. I was the principal adaptor, and thus perhaps I do not see the discharge of personal duties of script-writer? I do, however, think that so substantial a revision of a major modern theatre piece deserves more journalistic thoroughness than this.

I am reminded that when another critic noticed our *Because Of Two Masters* in Theatre Australia, carefully and at some length, he managed to avoid mentioning that the Company was presenting a new translation of the piece by Ben Rose and myself.

If Theatre Australia intends to be a complete record of the Australian theatre please, for its complete honesty, omit not.

**Neil Fright**  
Associate Director,

State Theatre Company of SA.

Steven Malt did not mention the Australian content in his review of *Oh What A Lovely War: Male!* but undoubtedly this production had to be on the scales of your F-1.

## TECHNICAL ASPECTS

Dear Sir

Firstly let me compliment you on your most readable and informative publication. *Theatre Australia* helps us, ourselves, in this communications backward to keep in touch with what the rest of the Australian theatre world is doing.

However, all your magazine's readers are not actors or artistic directors and I am writing to ask whether a segment could be included in the technical aspects of theatre production for the benefit of stage managers, production managers, technicians, and the like. These people are generally required to be fairly conversant in most the requirements of set designers and directors, and I believe, yours would be an

ideal medium for the exchange of ideas on set construction, properties manufacture, developments in stage lighting techniques and equipment, projection on sets, etc.

I would be most interested to hear your views on the subject as I believe it would widen your list of subscribers considerably.

Yours sincerely,

**C.J. Walk,**

Production Manager,

Performances, DDBAF, Qld.

## OPPORTUNITIES TO EXCHANGE

Gentlemen

Both your Peter and John notes arrived recently - always by slow boat, but nevertheless welcome. We at ACT were glad to read Alex Ruz's account of his experience with the second production of *McKissner Boy!* here at ACT.

Before he left, he told us that Seattle audiences had responded very much like those in Melbourne. I am glad that after reflection he still feels that way, because sometimes our plays don't come the other way and are distorted or explained badly.

Similarly, Ardyne Wood's account of children's theatre in the July issue reminded me that this year last year Barbara Manning and the Salamancas Theatre Company spent two weeks at ACT. They had some happy exchanges with our Young ACT Company which was rehearsing our fall new production as well as local response from our children's audiences.

I am convinced that there is a potential understanding and compatibility between our sub-subsided theatres and our non-profit resident theatres which is not generally realised. Our resident theatres are a different breed from the commercial theatre which both David Williamson and Gordon Chater experienced this past year.

We should look for opportunities to share and exchange ideas and talent the more.

Sincerely,

**Gregory A. Ellis,**  
Artistic Director,  
A Contemporary Theatre (ACT),  
Seattle, Washington, USA.

## TRAVELLING NORTH

Dear Sir

In Mick Rodger's review of David Williamson's play *Travelling North* in the October issue, he suggested that he doubted if this new play would be regarded as a success. It is probably worth pointing out that *Travelling North* looks like being

as successful as Williamson's last play, *The Club*. Its first season at the National was a complete sell-out and it played more than *The Club*. Certainly it was exceedingly well received. The play immediately toured in Canberra where the box office receipts exceeded the budgeted figure and the play is now running in Melbourne.

It will return to Sydney for a further season at the Theatre Royal in January.

In addition the play has been licensed outside Australia. It will open in London in May where it will be directed by Michael Blakemore. As a result of the National season three expressions of interest for an American production were received and it is highly likely that a production in Washington or New York will be organised late 1980.

The London production will be preceded by the National production of *The Club* at the Hampstead Theatre, Years sincerely,

**Tim Curran,**

Carmel Brown (Aust) Pty Ltd,

Paddington, NSW.

## HOOPLA RESPONDS TO STIMULI

Dear Sirs,

Like Noel Coward's *Goodie Goodie* ('over the fields and along the lane') John Hammer is at it again. Actually he is flattered by his frequent though misguided attacks. Hammer's screaming indicates an itch (the APG, John's previous seven year itch, now migrated to his temples). Please allow me to apply the healing salve.

John's basic point is that Hoopla merely duplicates the MTC and that Melbourne, like Birmingham, can only afford one company, albeit with up to two theatres. I take it as a compliment if we're duplicating this on less than the reach of the MTC's subsidy, we must be very good indeed.

There is an question that John has created the biggest and best Birmingham Recreation Company in the world. With dedication and skill he administers it well.

Hoopla's aims are different, our product is different and our style is different. Hoopla's primary focus is on the development and production of new Australian writing. In under three years we have presented over thirty new Australian plays. A large percentage of them premiered. Hoopla has presented works by such Australian authors as Richard Baskin, Ron Edwards, Ian Gooding, Gordon Graham, Frank Harber, Dorothy Hewett, John F. Lee (Rip),

(Continued page 19)



# Broadway, On and Off

By Karl Luvett

The decade of the anxious eighties is dawning, but it seems that nobody has sold Broadway in the vicinity of West 45th Street. The theatre marquees proudly indicate that the forces and talents are still with us.

Revels of musicals of those two decades are outpacing with a vengeance. Already we have *The Most Happy Fella* and *Prize Play* (with Sandy Duncan as Peter), and to come later in the season are *Onkelator* and *Wise Side Score*. Planned for next season is *Can-Can* with Zee Zee Zee. There is even talk in the Radio of revivals of *My Fair Lady* with Rex Harrison and *Camelot* with Richard Burton. The City Pastors seem to have a hand in all this.

Even the new shows seem to be caught in the time warp. *Sugar Babies* is a movie tribute to old-time burlesque and features Mickey Rooney as the top banana and Ann Miller tapping her hip-hip toes. The show is a clever mixture of brass and bad taste, and almost succeeds in opening the suspicion that the time burlesque was never gone like this.

The 1940s *Radio Hour* is a further looking back through Nostalgia's distortion mirror. We are in the golden age of big time bands as we watch the participants in a Christmas 1942 broadcast of a tacky radio show. The strength of the show is the score by Kern, Arlen Rodgers and all, sung by a talented team of Broadway newcomers.

The Filby was the one of the innocent sex comedy and the *Moss of Blue* (which is currently well represented by Bernard Slade's *Romantic Comedy*). Mr. Slade seems to favour big names and this time around he has Anthony Perkins and Mia Farrow as a pair of collaborating playwrights. We watch Mr. Farrow as a meek fourth-grade English teacher from Vermont meet, on the very day he is getting married, a playwright who has long adored him. They start up to co-author Broadway hits and flogs, spending 10 years trying to decide between love and friendship, while she grows from school marm to sophisticate and he goes from Mr. Clean to slob.

In the first scene Mr. Perkins awkwardly harms himself and we all too soon don Mr. Slade as the play's clumsy construction exposes all the clichés of the genre. Credibility soon evaporates and neither of the play's stars has the requisite charm or skill to blind us to the play's shortcomings.



Mr. Farrow in Romantic Comedy

Mr. Perkins alternates between barely wit and pretentious, while Mr. Farrow demonstrates that during her two years with the Royal Shakespeare Company, she at least learnt to speak up loudly and clearly in the circumstances it isn't enough. There is just no chemistry between the two players so that *Romantic Comedy* offers little romance and even less comedy.

It is significant to note, however, that the play looks like being a bona fide hit. The public at its present hunger for comedies "as they used to be" is obviously ready to forgive a great deal.

Glancing backward has never been the right line of Off-Broadway, but in several of this season's new plays there is a discernible trend towards New style naturalism.

It has probably never pictured himself in a Brooklyn tenement garage which is the setting for Howard Wexman's *Award for Sarah's*. The title is a thing for a punch in the mouth which is what Fate seems to be doing to the play's hero as crisis follows crisis in his howling affection and loud Jewish family. The play as yet is rough hewn but Mr. Wexman has an ear for Brookline and an ability to create a set

of characters that are varied and convincing. He also succeeds in catching a recent period, 1975 and the end of the Vietnam War, while spotlighting the specific problems of his hero Harry, a potential Soviet child.

Some of period is also one of the several strengths of *Each House Alone* by Kevin O'Monaghan. We are in a kitchen in St. Louis in 1919 watching a widow and her four grown daughters during a hairwave. They wait for the son of the house to return from war. If the situation looks languid and sentimental, the play is certainly not. It is charged with energy, while displaying wonderfully natural variations in mood and colour. The five women cast is exemplary with Jo Henderson as the mother giving a first-rate performance.

*Each House Alone* is clearly the best new play of the season so far and Mr. O'Monaghan is someone we should get to know better. His clear vision of that 1919 St. Louis kitchen and its occupants, its backward glance that is filled with vitality, attention and truth. By presenting an ordinary picture composed of many details of character, time and place Kevin O'Monaghan reminds us that looking back can provide a special vision of its own.

# SPOTLIGHT

## The return of June Jago

By Pamela Ruskin

For those of us who saw the original production of Ray Fester's *Summers of the Screamers with Doll*, June Jago is undebatably printed on our minds as Olive, though she played many other roles too for the Elizabethan Theatre Trust, Williamson's for Garry Carroll and for Kern Brodnak. When John Sumner took the MTC, or the UTRC as it was then, production of *The Doll* to London in 1957, almost two years after its Melbourne opening, June Jago went with it, with the rest of the cast at Oliver's behest, to open at the New Theatre (now the Albany). It ran for seven and a half months and, says June, "It could have run much longer but it was taken off for transfer to Broadway where it wasn't understood by American audiences and flopped in a three and a half week season."

While playing in London, June was offered another role and decided to stay on, "not so much by intent but because work was offering. I decided I wanted to study classical work and there wasn't much around in Australia at the time." She remained in England until mid-1959, returning only with Kenf Michell's Chequer Company for a brief tour a couple of years ago.

She decided to come back to Australia after talking to John Sumner during his 1978 sabbatical. He asked her to join the MTC for the following year's season and she was cast as Mrs Mallaprog in *The Brat* at Athenaeum 1 as Gertrude in Sumner's production of *Hamlet* in the small upstairs Athenaeum 2 theatre and will open in early February as Maggie in Harold Pinter's celebrated play, *Home*. *Home* is to be produced by English director, Frank Hauser. Will she stay beyond one season? It looks like it. "I expect I will because John intends to reproduce *Hamlet* in the large auditorium of the Athenaeum

probably in April."

June Jago herself has changed somewhat since she left Australia. Unless my memory has played me false, she has firmed down considerably and is today a very assertive woman. She is elegant, articulate and full of enthusiasm for the changed scene in the Australia theatre.

We discuss the many changes she observes after twenty-two years away. "The plays that are being done now would not have been possible then. The public only wanted plays that were light and entertaining. One never heard plays discussed as one does now. I don't think young people were as interested in the theatre as they are today. There is an enormous difference too in the standard of

design. The dressing and sets are impossible. It seems to me the changes in twenty-two years are far greater than I would have thought possible in that time."

June believes that all this says a lot about Australians as well as it does about the theatre. "I find the young actors here have a marvellous vitality and energy. They are so hardworking and very imaginative and creative and I think that is a reflection of Australians generally."

Working in England for so long gave June a vast range of experience, working with outstanding companies and remarkable directors. "Possibly the experience that taught me most was working with the Experimental

(Continued over)



Group attached to the Royal Shakespeare Company. Peter Brook was the director and he made us question everything we had ever read or done and everything we were doing at the time. A contrasting influence was Robin Phillips, who is now Artistic Director of the Stratford-on-Avon Theatre. I first met him when I was working with the Bristol Old Vic. He was only about twenty, just graduated from the Bristol Old Vic school but he knew more about every facet of the theatre even then than I shall ever know. He directed me in a very difficult Lorca play, *The House of Bernarda Alba* in which I played the title role. It was a superb production. The play had been translated by Tom Stoppard and in the cast were Penelope Keith and Mia Farrow. I also worked with him at Chichester in a lovely production of Christopher Fry's *The Lady's Not for Burning* and also *The Beggar's Opera*.

We discuss the advantages of working in England particularly in the classics. "I think the most impressive and valuable aspect is that you work with a nucleus of actors who've never put a foot wrong. Even if the script and the director are bad, they still turn on a marvellous performance."

What then are June's pluses as far as Australia is concerned? "It is good to be working with John Sumner again and, it is also marvellous to be with Ray and to see him acting again after so long. It's almost a miracle to have been involved in a production like John's *Hamlet*. What was different about it? Well, firstly the proximity of the audience in a small theatre that seats only 100 people. It was a very vital performance and although it ran for three and a half hours, people said that the time passed very quickly. As an actor, I could feel the attention and concentration of the audience as if we were all handed together."

Give us *The Doll* remains one of June's favourite parts and one of the best she thinks she's ever done. "Yes, I'd love to do it again. I've never seen the trilogy because I was in England when it was done but I read *Achilles* recently and I said to Ray that I felt I was reading something I'd lived through. I had imagined Olive as a young girl. *Order Tiers* didn't have that impact because I'd never really

thought of Olive as she was during the war. *The Dollsland* is a wonderful play because it is so crucial. It is about the terrible reckoning of middle age when you realise that your dreams haven't been fulfilled and you haven't really achieved what you hoped and expected to achieve."

Looking to the future, June hopes to do more classical plays here because they are more demanding and more rewarding. One always finds something new in them. In the meantime when not working she likes to swim which she thinks is the most marvellous and relaxing exercise, to

walk and to talk to people with gardens about their gardens. "I haven't got a garden of my own at the moment but I hope to have one in time. I really love gardening and talking to experts about them." A brief, very fit woman, June Jago is full of laughter and good humour. She likes to act as if somewhat guiltily, express a faint-hearted attitude to all forms of physical fitness. "That just isn't good enough! Now you must start walking and swimming! It's most important." Variably comical, I make promises I have not the faintest intention of keeping.



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# Donald McDonald — AGC Paradine

By Robert Page

A partnership between one of the Australia's biggest financial houses and an entrepreneurial company set up by world media personality David Frost makes the result, AGC-Paradine, a major operator in the commercial theatre world.

Last year they had the Debbie Reynolds *Las Vegas Show*, *PS Your Cat Is Dead* with Robin Ramsay, and Robin Archer in *Tough As Nails*. The original company Paradine Patterson had largely been concerned with promoting rock concerts and the change came, not when AGC entered the arrangement, but when Donald McDonald replaced Pat Condon as managing director.

The finance company went into the entertainment business for the public relations benefit of associating themselves with the pleasurable things in people's lives, and name exposure. But AGC did not want to be passive patrons; they chose instead a much more active role. McDonald thought their image should be more diverse and he was at first appointed to develop a classical music and theatre division. As things turned out he was running the whole box and dice within six weeks.

Not only did McDonald's vision suit his own interests — "my knowledge of rock music isn't famous" — but the move to more middle market product coincided with the pop concert business becoming increasingly unstable. Now, though he works to a board of representatives from both partners, McDonald is the lynchpin. Yet considering the size and power of those involved the entrepreneurial division is minor: general manager, operations manager John Molyn, company secretary, a few clerical staff and stage-in talent whenever it is needed.

McDonald's background is a long list of top arts management jobs, any one of which, many would say a lifetime for Director of Finance



Donald McDonald

("publisher" in American terms) of Poper, the AETT, first General Manager of the Australian Opera, Director of Musica Viva, and though no longer a memory to be cherished — Harry M Miller's right hand man for about six months in Compustock.

For all that he is a modest, quietly spoken, swish figure just over forty his formal training after a commerce degree at the University of NSW, is as a chartered accountant. "But even then there was a foreboding of the future with my principle client being Mena-Goldwyn-Mayer." Despite having left the Opera amidst circumstances as stormy as those leading to the resignation of Hemmings "I was part of the famous or infamous list of Opera Gl Me which is now getting to be fairly lengthy" — and will bring evidence about Compustock, his scrupulous integrity and outward reserve have kept his reputation intact. The phrase "I can never see myself as playing a dramatic role" sums up his

modus vivendi.

As a manager he sees his job as one of administrative control to allow as much freedom to creative persons to fulfil their function "Without seeming to or seeking to interfere with that artistic freedom." It was such an approach which led to the establishment of the Sydney String Quartet, though characteristically he adds "but their success is of their own winning", the Australian Chamber Orchestra, of which he assumes a director, and his involvement with the Australian National Playwrights Conference as the administrator of the 1980 event.

Putting remarks on the companies he has worked for should be recorded.

**On the Elizabeth Theatre Trust:** "In 1969 it was the twilight of one heyday — I'm sure it will have several — but that was when it lost controlled control of the opera and dance companies."

(Continued page 17)

# Richard Tulloch

By Donna Sadka

The first four plays in which Richard Tulloch performed, while a Melbourne law student circa 1970 were all early Hubbard — which may or may not be a significant clue to the kind of work he now does so successfully in Theatre in Education.

He never practised law but subsequently did a Dip Ed. during which he undertook a project making plays each morning with kids 4 to 6 year olds in a high rise flat area in Carlton.

He says it all seems very basic now and fairly rough and ready but they involved the children by devising a series of different situations using the same characters. Each session was followed by workshops, painting and making things. It was his entry into children's theatre.

Joining the Magic Mushroom mime group in 1975 expanded his range working with pre-school to teenagers at community centre, schools and prisons, presenting "fairly structured things" in events. Regular work with improvisation teacher David Lander provided the other necessary skill.

At that time Tulloch says there was a big surge of interest in children's theatre. "People recognised the value of getting kids involved and participating and of watching what they did in performance rather than just the spot reactions of panto. From there it moved to having them play roles, of thinking themselves into situations. Improvisation allowed actors enough flexibility to be aware and sensitive to the kids' thoughts and actions rather than concentrating on their own performance in a tightly scripted play. In improvisational performance you can talk to each kid in character, draw them out and keep them going."

Later in England he saw the development of "early political" groups doing issue plays on such topics as pollution or the arms which were aimed at making the children visually aware. Although only an observer most of the time he saw a lot of groups in action and became aware



Richard Tulloch in *Kupipi*

of the great importance of feeling as a teaching aid. He calls it the guts of drama, which, combined with information can get children to identify and to learn.

He admits he's rather suspicious of documentary theatre "such all the laughs coming from theatrical tricks and dance routines. If you've real characters and keep them strongly representing one point of view, it's very effective, despite possible flaws like over-simplification or melodramatic situations."

Although Dorothy Heathcote's visit to Australia was a big factor in increased recognition of TIE he believes we're still a long way to go before it is fully explored in schools.

"There are a lot of drama teachers being trained but I think it's still not really accepted by the other staff members as being important. They see drama as the fun period, like sport or music. Kids will go to drama periods instead of drama teachers being got in to help with social studies projects for instance. There are very few schools where a group of teachers can work with a group of kids, sometimes two or three classes, and combine their resources with a drama teacher."

An actor and musician as well as a writer, Tulloch spent eighteen months

with The Mime and Modern Dance Troupe in Holland and this year played the juvenile lead opposite Nomi Houthebaert in the premiere of Dorothy Hewett's *Was Jesus Married* at the Playhouse. He has been with the TIE team there for two years. First as their writer and subsequently taking over as director when Andrew Ross left.

He sees a constant need for TIE practitioners to keep themselves fresh and alive by seeking new writers, new themes and new theatrical forms.

The Playhouse team has three shows currently in performance all of which he has written and directed.

*The Dick and Dave Show*, *Kupipi* and *The Red M J* but he obviously derives especial satisfaction from the two plays he has done dealing with aboriginal problems. Both are set in WA and both used some aboriginal performers. Although he wrote the first, *Red Earth* (a Irish enactment of the pressures on both blacks and whites in the early days) he found working with aboriginal writer Jack Davis on *Kupipi* (Hume) intensely rewarding.

"Jack's background knowledge was so different. He's quite strong on dialogue and knew about all sorts of things we (he and Ross) couldn't have a hope of knowing. Our job was to make it vivid with visual ideas and relating it to the kids."

Something similar to this is one of his priorities for 1988 — to work with a writer who need know nothing about theatre but "a lot about something else" (women in society, unemployed youth) and to act as theatrical interlocutor between him and the children.

He also wants to do one play with special schools or deaf children. "Something with a particular project that can't possibly pay for itself."

"Ideally I'd like three companies. The demand is so constant we can't hope to meet it. Our shows are booked out almost within days of being advertised."

Which may be frustrating for the company but says a lot for the quality of the work which he and his team have to offer.



(From page 11)

**On the Opera Company:** "The problems have been viewed in personal terms, but I think they actually spring from a failure to basically conceptualise what sort of company it can be within the resource framework and the geographical demands of this. As it stood then and as it stands now it's an equation that can't be balanced—and GM's will continue to come and go. It was so unhappy for me that I nearly decided to leave the whole entertainment field."

**On Musica Viva:** "When it was set up it was the result of far sighted vision...it proved to be a period of enormous professional happiness for me."

**On Computicket:** "Intellectually I believed and still believe in computerised box offices but I realised fairly early on that I had committed one of those classic sins of misreading myself in a role."

The two major problems which McDonald sees for commercial theatre, are, firstly the size of the

market. Sydney though comparable with a mid-west US town in population mounts immensely more theatre, and secondly the "gross revenue potential", when top ticket prices on Broadway are now \$26 compared to \$13-14 here. He feels that there must be an increase, something the Ballet and Opera have already recognised, but needs the co-operation of the subsidised drama companies if prices are to be raised to an economic level. AGC Paradiise itself does not consider money of overriding concern though they would "prefer not to lose too much".

Looking to the future, McDonald was asked if Ken Hoadson's announced retirement affected their thinking. "It's hard to imagine Ken Hoadson ever completely retiring but there is a potential vacuum, and I wouldn't deny that his going is a factor in long term planning."

So what are they lining up for 1980? AGC Paradiise are managing the Sydney season of the Warsaw Philharmonic Orchestra and in March April the Komische Opera Ballet from Berlin in a major joint

venture with the Adelaide Festival Trust. "It's a whole new direction," says McDonald. "For AGC Paradiise to be involved with a major European dance company."

Their major theatrical venture is *They're Playing Our Song* by Neil Simon, Marvin Hamlisch and Carol Bayer Sager. "The current gold-plated hit on Broadway," scheduled to open in Sydney, in July.

It's a two hander which marvellously integrates the songs in that the characters are a lyricist and songwriter, and is a genuine musical comedy with plenty of laughs. Singer actors of the standing needed, with the length of the run and tours envisaged, means that already two casts are being sought.

AGC Paradiise has no clear policy on Australian content but it is one of McDonald's own concerns to be involved in as much local product as possible. At the moment there are negotiations going on for a slice of an existing Australian musical. That kind of joint venture with other promoters here and a decrease in the present hectic competition will, he believes, be a major new step in the eighties.

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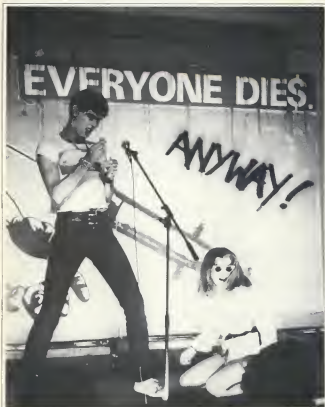
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# CABARET CONSPIRACY

*Nothing as popular as **Cabaret** could ever really die. Now it has returned to town again in a form that is distanced from the '70s and is as up to date as tomorrow. Ostentatious, hedonistic and filled with theatrical camp it looks untippable and on the basis of major public response. Here Johnnie Allen looks at a bar led to the more important grass roots movement since Ben Faltor punched off his circuit*



*Fifi L'Amour and Jandi Rambow. Photo: Marie Thörn*



*Geoffrey Cendon and Boom Boom La Bern Photo Marie Thorby*

Cabaret Conspiracy began in February 1979 as a response by performers to the lack of venues, opportunities and management for their art.

Some ten or a dozen acts came together and began regular Sunday night shows in a back street coffee shop called Garibaldi's in Darlinghurst.

The old style vaudeville format of individual artists presenting their acts caught fire, and the Sunday night shows soon became packed. The cabaret quickly gained a reputation for hardy, outrageous shows, sometimes awful, but with flashes of real brilliance and showcasing the best new talent in town.

The early shows gained much of their flavour from the two drag composites, Dora and Mel, using bad taste and sexual innuendo (sometimes as subtle as a sledge hammer) to make us points, in the best tradition of cabaret. Dora Fish had established Sybil and the Synthetics, Sydney's original draggme outrageous, and had performed with The Tubes in San Francisco—good qualifications for the anarchic, anti-establishment stance taken by the cabaret.

As more performers and artists were attracted by the spirit of the cabaret, it began losing its strength with massive downtown shows - "with a cast of thousands and a budget of twenty cents."

For a while the cabaret brought back to Sydney what it had been lacking since the good old days of Revue: a sense of daring, outrage, and grandiose attempts at the impossible.

Sometimes the results were horrific, sometimes spectacularly successful, but always interesting! A new genre had been born, with its roots in the traditional cabaret of Paris and Berlin in the Thirties, but an eye and an ear for the nighties.

The character of the cabaret changed when Dora left, first to take a role in the Gay Theatre Company's production of *41 Four Caves St.*, and then to return to San Francisco to work with cabaret groups there.

During those hectic six months, the cabaret gave over one hundred and



fifty performers their ten minutes of stardom on the tiny stage at Garibaldi's: some fledgling amateurs, some seasoned troopers, some never to be seen again, others to go on and establish remarkable careers.

One of the early highlights was the arrival of two members of the Lindsay Kemp Company from England: Michael Mataro and Kevin English. They quickly established a following within the cabaret, and combined with one of its stars and founding members, Fifi L'Amour, to form their own company Sideshow.

Sideshow went on to become one of the most exciting new companies in the country, producing *Cafe Debau* in November, and opening for a six week season with *Burlesco* at the Mirood in December.

Geoff Kelso and Janet Curtis, the comedy duo responsible for the *Dr Po* scenes on radio station 2JJ, went on to do their own highly successful two man shows in many venues around Sydney.

Boon Boon La Bern catapulted from a near-disastrous first performance with the cabaret to becoming one of its greatest stars, mounting her own one-woman show and creating a following which indicates a major career in the making.

To cope with this expansion of its performers and their talents, the cabaret started its own agency in July, and opened its own showcase venue,

Palms at Taylor Square, in August.

In those months, Palms presented over thirty individual shows, including Sideshow's *The End of the Road Show*, Kelso and Curtis' *Small Furry Animals*, Mike Mullins' *Amuck Or Not Please Be Careful*, and presented visitors from interstate including Tim McKew from Melbourne and Linda Dancer Company from New Zealand.

The cabaret undertook its first tour to Melbourne in August, playing the Flying Trapeze, the Fram Factory, the Crystal Ballroom and the upstairs room at the Last Laugh.

In November/December the cabaret toured to the Australian Drama Festival in Adelaide, and participated in a three state shows with performers from Melbourne and Adelaide.

The cabaret has dispersed as various members have become more professional and more focused on their acts. It still continues its monthly "new faces" show, and has had the effect of opening up other venues around town.

As this article goes to print, seawall the return of Dora Fish, this time with an entire new show from San Francisco - *Shit A Go Go!*

The parent body of the cabaret, Aquarius Youth Service, has been granted a lease on the old Gladstone Hotel in William Street at Kings Cross, and the intention is to turn the ground floor into a permanent cabaret-style venue. Where the shows can be put on a more sound financial basis, and visiting companies from overseas and interstate can be given a home. Shows under negotiation include Alan Pomeroy's *Shewazz Cabaret* and Michael Brennan's *Absolute Pop* from Melbourne, and the return of the irrepressible Busby Berkeley's from Europe.

In the nine months of its existence, the cabaret has produced over one hundred new shows, and for all its infant arrogance and rawness has succeeded by sheer enthusiasm in creating a genuine new theatre movement in Sydney. Alternative theatre is alive again and with its ability and willingness to take risks, is preparing the way for the theatre of the eighties.

*The wedding of Dora Fish on Cabaret Conspiracy - Dora Fish, George Sims Photo - Martin Thorby.*

# THE FESTIVAL OF SYDNEY



**BY STEPHEN HALL**

The Festival of Sydney is only four years old and, therefore, the youngest in Australia.

When I was invited to consider a festival for Sydney in late 1973 I had to give a great deal of thought as to whether a city as large and as varied in its day-to-day artistic activity needed a festival at all, and, if so, what sort. It was very clear in my mind that there should be no attempt to recreate another arts festival when cities such as Adelaide and Perth already did this sort of thing extremely well and were by their size a more intimate arena in which such arts festivals normally flourish.

The idea of duplicating a Sydney Moomba did not appeal either, although I thought this might have been the right course to follow when the then Prime Minister, Gough Whitlam, suggested that a new festival for Sydney should perhaps be called "Symba".

In the ensuing months before a formal proposal was put to my parent body, The Sydney Committee, I had talks with the directors of various arts organisations, with gallery directors, with tourism, hotel and restaurant leaders, and with retailers and other business leaders.

Research was carried out into our population patterns, holiday patterns, weather patterns, and any other factors that could conceivably affect the name and type of festival we should have.

It was a dictionary definition of a festival as, "the time when a city or place celebrates itself with feasting, cultural events and sporting events" that led me to my first conclusion. Any new festival for Sydney would have to take place at a time when the city was at its best.

As Sydney is predominantly an outdoor city and a city of the harbour, high summer presented itself as a logical period. High summer seemed also to fit many other criteria. It is a time when the bulk of our population is on leave and by half, I mean the 55 per cent of the population under the age of 25. This period also appealed to retailers, hoteliers and the tourist industry in general. As for arts organisations, I heard the old catch cry that "nobody goes to the theatre in summer", quite ignoring the fact that since 1973-74 when the Australian Opera mounted the first of its ere-

annual Summer Seasons, this heavy old theatrical chestnut had been dropped.

Another factor that finally checked our choice of January as the month in which to hold the new festival, was the fact that summer in Sydney coincided with the northern hemisphere winter and even four years ago one could confidently predict that international air fares would come down in price and that Sydney could become a popular destination for visitors from northern climes.

The logical curtain-up provided by a past New Year's Eve celebration around the Opera House and the grand finale on the Australia Day public holiday at the end of the month provided me with the theatrical

panache in opera, I had come to realise that the sight of full houses every night can tell one into a sense of false security and even make one believe that a large section of the community is enjoying the performances. Regrettably that is not the case, the man in the street, making a family on an ordinary wage, does not have spare cash to attend live theatre unless as an occasional treat.

So in many ways the Festival of Sydney began with two aims: one of a genuine artistic nature, the other of a social kind. We determined that instead of trying to graft overseas attractions on to an already full theatrical life, we would endeavour to encourage additional local artistic activity at the highest level. We would also aim, and here our social conscience came in, to present as many performances as possible free to the public at large.

How have these two policies succeeded? That our first year had problems is well known but lessons learned are best not repeated and mistakes made in that first year were costly in personal and financial terms. In the subsequent two years significant advances have been made and I would say the highlights of these have been the opening each New Year's Eve at the Sydney Opera House which has been an almost unqualified success from the outset and to quote Premier Wran, "the first time the Opera House was truly opened to the public of Sydney".

The success of the Hyde Park Festival Village concept, where throughout the month performers and all types from chamber musicians and dancers, to mime, puppets and street theatre groups, perform in an atmosphere of *any* conviviality in light, airy structures, or just under the trees, has also been very successful. Provision of numerous activities for very young children has made it possible for thousands of families to spend a happy and even instructional and uplifting day together in Hyde Park. Last year an estimated 900,000 people attended the hundreds of performances and activities that took place there throughout the month.

The use of Clark Island for presentation of plays for children sponsored by the Festival and produced by the Nimrod Theatre has again provided many thousands of



Stephen Mall

framework I felt the North needed. But what sort of festival was the Festival of Sydney to be?

During part of 1975 I had spent many nights visiting outer suburban high schools monitoring the schools' performances of musical plays on behalf of the Arts Council of New South Wales. During these months I had the opportunity to talk at first hand to many would-be young performers and I quickly realised how few of them ever visited the inner city itself or ever attended a professional performance in a city theatre.

Some festival directors have been heard to say that they are unashamedly classist (as is somebody who had worked for the past thirteen



*Newrod's Children's Show on Clark Island.*

lanalua with an unique opportunity to enjoy one of the loveliest aspects of their city and at the same time share a theatrical experience.

The growing popularity of the Sydney International Jazz Festival, which this year will take place at the York Theatre in the Seymour Centre, has been a refreshing expansion of an important area of musical expression.

Similarly, the 1980 Festival will use the third Festival of Folklife with top folk performers from overseas and Australia giving ten concerts in the Concert Hall of the Sydney Opera House.

Last year's funding of four new Australian plays, which were presented by the Ensemble Theatre at The Stables, gave four Australian writers professional productions of their works that might otherwise not have taken place. This highly successful experiment will be continued this year with another four new Australian plays.

In 1980 the Festival will break further new ground in presenting two new chamber orchestra groups to the Sydney public. Called respectively The Sydney Virtuoso and The Festival of



*Australian Opera's The Triumph of Honour*

Sydney Orchestra, these groups will give a total of six concerts in the newly air-conditioned Sydney Town Hall.

Roger Woodward will perform the complete cycle of Beethoven piano sonatas over eight concerts and his choice of these programmatic murals will with the ABC's two Festival concerts in which five young Australian pianists will play the five Beethoven piano concertos with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra.

The way the city's art galleries have got behind the Festival to mount special exhibitions on our behalf has also been heartening. Here again, the impetus has largely been local and inspiration has not always been sought from overseas. Two years ago an exhibition of private treasures culled from New South Wales homes produced one of the most successful exhibitions ever mounted at David Jones' Gallery. This year, the *Australian Women's Weekly's* collection of 11 works by Conrad Martens will be shown to the public for the first time at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, together with The Ballet's unique collection of antique silver.

Not all of the above are items of

relative public interest only; the greatest success of The Festival of Sydney has been its series of public events. In addition to the vast numbers who have daily attended the Hyde Park Festival Village, tens of thousands have turned out to each of the weekend spectacles we have staged.

Finally, therefore, I express the opinion that, to be a total success, a Festival must appeal to all tastes. Promotion of new plays, new music and new dance are important, however, it is equally important that the Festival must appeal to all tastes. Promotion of new plays, new music and new dance are important, however, it is equally important that the Festival belong to its people and seek its inspirational sources from their roots. As well as our cultural activities we have tried unashamedly to entertain, divert and stimulate the man in the street.

Only time will tell whether this formula has been truly successful and of lasting impact. For the moment all we can say is that the people seem to like it as, in the words of a *Sydney Morning Herald* editorial, "Sydney has taken its Festival to its heart".



# T H E SUNNY SOUTH



BY DAVID MARR

*The Sunny South* works. That's reason enough for the Sydney Theatre Company to launch itself with this almost antique goldfields melodrama. It's not just that *The Sunny South* was a great hit of the Australian stage, or that it's set in Australia, or that it's densely populated with Australian types which justifies revival. The point is that *The Sunny South* is a wonderful, cranky, awkward and spectacular piece of theatre.

Richard Wherrett says in the blurb in the company's subscription brochure that theatre "must exist in the present tense." It's stretching the point with *The Sunny South* but you can see what Wherrett is getting at. Every time the dandified servant Smillees enters (with his head in *The Tires*) to start the show against all the odds of his class with a string of (dead) dull hen roars, the sense is the present. It is alive now.

"It troubles my patrons very little with my servants," says Smillees as the servants' bells ring unanswered. "I let 'em kip themselves as much as possible. It does 'em good — gets 'em their superluous fat!" And somehow against all the laws of good sense, and some of the fundamentals of dramatic development, *The Sunny South* gets itself living and breathing from Chester House, England, in the goldfields, through brushes with bush fingers, unexplained love relationships and a few songs to the final ambush on the Zig Zag railway.

The spectacular possibilities of *The Sunny South* attracted directors to the play before Wherrett. It was published in 1975 (for the first time — from a text found in the Lord Chamberlain's office) by Currency in a beautiful edition by Margaret Williams. A couple of years later there was a season by SLDs at Sydney University. Jan



Sharron toyed with the idea of launching the Pann Company with *The Storm: South*, but it waited for Wherrett to stage the first full-scale production for eighty years.

It needs a huge production. In the 1890s and 1890s handbills offered FIVE HUGE SENSATIONS in Darrell's Anglo-Australian drama.

*The Diggings Scene!*  
*The Bank Smash!*  
*The Battle in the Bush!*  
*The Bushranger's Lair!*  
*The Zig Zag railway!*

It was this last scene in which Darrell surpassed himself. The colony was immensely proud of the vertical shunting yard that pulled and shoved trains up the west face of the Blue Mountains at Lithgow. Darrell set his "scene of unparalleled grandeur" there in the dead of the night. Just as the true lovers, married at last, were saying good for England with their gold nugget in the boot, their farewells are interrupted by the monster Deep Chester's special train at all hazards. Danger!

"Morley (here). You'd better stay to look after the girls."

"Two (of the genus new chorus) I beg your pardon!"

"Morley. You'd better stay to look after the women."

"Two. No. I think not. We'll leave Ben."

"Brewer (a representative digger). No. I'm a digger I am, and I'll be darned if you do."

"Chatter (an English gentleman). Morley, this is a foolish risk you're running. Leave the authorities to deal with the seconded and his gang."

"Morley. And perhaps lose a chance of catching him?" No. There's no satisfaction for me no more while that villain lives. 'Tis a duel to the death between us and I'll not back him of this meeting. (To Jinks - a son of the soil) Telegraph that our special will go on as arranged and let their train meet us at the foot of the Zig Zag."

But if *The Storm: South* were just an evening of the heroic stuff it would be stale before interval. Two things come to its rescue. The first is Bubs. Bubs Berkeley (based on the bush's toughest and resourceful but with impeccable manners. Carried through the Mason wars to an ammunition box and raised

by his father's best mate, Bubs is every inch a lady. She may offer to throw the barrels into the fishpond, and have an easy familiarity with the goldrivers, but rough times have not obscured her qualities. And when the bushrangers (who are in cahoots with the barrels that throw the Choppers out of Chester House) kidnap Bubs, she shows remarkable pluck.

"Duggan (a bushranger). Hold on you. Stand where you are. Try the bolting dodge, and women or no women, I'll drop yer a stiff in yer tracks. You know me."

"Bubs. I do."

"Duggan. Ha ha! You do! Ha ha! And that frightens the run out of you Bubs. It does not."

"Duggan. It does. Why don't you bolt now?"

"Bubs. Because the blood that's in me won't let me run even from such a cowardly thief as you."

"Duggan. What! Cuss it, the old probe that threatened and beat me from the start."

[A note to Ph.D. students who in the next few years will no doubt cluster round this only extant Darrell text



unintentionally controlled research indicates that *Bubs* was named after The Blanche Barkly, a suggestion of 1,745 1/3 or discovered Kingpower, 27 August, 1857.

*Bubs* sets *The Sunset Song* apart. But there is something in the feel of the text that also rescues it from mere heroics. Margaret Williams in her introduction to the Currency edition puts this down to the tradition of Australian malestama.

Perhaps he just didn't seem so black and intense to a healthy young colony enjoying a new affluence and sophistication, and beginning to romanticise its own past. If there is one distinctive quality of Australian malestama it is generosity, a relaxed good humour which pervades the whole and makes the contrivances of the plot and machinations of a flimsy love rather unnecessarily falling by comparison.

The sunny generosity is established by a wonderful parade of stock figures: Narrow Creek Joe (a timberbucker), Chance Chesser (born in the purple), Monte Jack (a thief and man), Black Tracker Jim (a native companion), but

again there is something more in it than that. *The Sunset Song* taps a theme as old as Australian literature which is still, in subtle disguises, potent today: that we may love in Australia, but we're not coming out.

In *The Sunset Song* we are not cut off from English society. Matt Morley, here, is the nephew and heir of Worthy Chesser. We're as close to the Queens on the diggings as we would be in Pall Mall in distinction to all that Eureka business. George Darrell has his money, touring Victoria at the beach picnic. We're not, obviously, missing out on money.

"Here. I'm a digger, I am, and I am much on palaver, but what I says I means and what I says I does, and what I says, old gal is at how we've struck it here. That's what we have, struck it here."

"Bubs. Good for you. Henry old man. We're in."

And at the end, in the days before darkness made life hell for Conservative governments and before even the working holiday was abolished, the heroes and heroines of *The Sunset Song* could go home at the end of a

day. There was no resentment, it was exposed of the better sort.

"Links. You're all going with lumps of money and a galaxy of beauty. You leave many friends behind you who wish you well, but there is one young gent ebhlem who wishes you well, who can't say much but who thinks the more, for he's loving the best friend he has in the world, and his heart's up on his throat and the brrry's in his eyes, and he says goodbye and God bless you, and... and... his foot is on his native land, and his name's links."

*The Sunset Song* takes a terrible toll of blood, capsules, pistol caps, smoke pellets, body black and train noses. It is a challenge to any company, and its nature makes great technical difficulties. For Sydney audiences, no matter how splendid Wherrett's production may be, the real test will be the *Zig Zag*. What "Never, never, never, never" is to Lear, and hell is to Don Giovanni, the *Zig Zag* derelict is to *Sunset Song*. How will he do it? And will the Opera House of 1880 meet the challenges the Sydney Opera House took on its stride at the premiere in 1885?

## WRITERS' VIEW

# ELEANOR WITCOMBE

Most writers look back on their first works (memorabilia) fondly. But with *Princess of the Sun* I look back also in containing (unabashed) embarrassment.

A few years ago someone described this little play for kids as an "Australian children's theatre classic." In that it is 32 years old this year, I suspect it has acquired a pattern of venerability, and in that it must have been seen by many people and performed more times than any other Australian play (at least, it must have achieved some sort of status). But to me the whole thing is best described as an embarrassing failure.

Theatricality, the late 1950s when *Princess* had its birth, was a rather unattractive period. One is amazed by the amount of promise it seemed to hold, and depressed by the way it crumbled. A lot of this theatrical largeness was due no doubt to post-war nationalism and the "Golden Age" optimism which Charlie, geometer, part of which was an official criticism for a "national theatre." Everyone was talking about it. We all believed it was about to happen. With rumours of the granting of subsidies flowing all over Sydney, the standard of "kids theatre" was surprisingly high. The commercial theatre was booming, and somewhere between the two, Peter Finch's Mercury, with its "let-up" theatre and high school was setting new standards. Neither last nor least in all this burgeoning was a children's theatre movement which started in suburban Mosman.

But we of the Mosman Theatre School had naturally loftier aspirations than children's theatre, and ignored it. On the strength of a forgettable one-act play, I had winged my way into the School when it

first started in 1947 by telling the director, Sydney John Kay, I hadn't any money, but I wanted to be a playwright. "Marvelous!" effused the chairman Mr Kay. "You are the first not to want to be an actress. We give you a scholarship!"

Of course I wanted to be an actress, but the stroke took on Peter Finch's face eventually, perhaps, changed my mind. Lady Macbeth wasn't supposed to be funny. Well, there was still playwriting.

On the strength of the one-act someone connected with the Mosman Children's Theatre Club asked me to have a go at a play for children. Having my sights set at the time on writing a tragedy, not about a lone woman on a windswept beach, I wasn't interested, and they made me an offer I couldn't refuse: three performances, and one free guinea. I needed the money.

I agreed to whip up some little thing, nothing however to have anything to do with haem among the gutters, or stages full of rusty apocalyptic little show-offs and audiences full of unattractive moans. The did no good to anyone, certainly not the cause of theatre to which all good Mosmans were dedicated. To my surprise the children's theatre people agreed enthusiastically. Their ideal was to present first class theatre to children wherever they could reach them, to town city and country, and eventually found a national children's theatre with branches throughout the Commonwealth. If not the world, it was a damn good universe. I was won.

Knowing nothing whatever about writing plays for children, I decided to be pragmatic. There was no option. I was asked to try to give the play some "educational" content, to get Education

Department support, make it legal to get local council support, and could it please enter it to their costs of three flats, a second-hand backdrop and a second pound budget? Being went any idea of a Max Reinhardt spectacular. The answer to all this seemed to be a local period piece based on some local incident and with enough fast and furious action to keep the audience becoming bored with the scenery. A necessarily ironic pace slowly got rid of any idea of music and dancing which the local School of Ballet considered a prerequisite of children's plays. I didn't.

A surprising group of lack was finding a store of persons and buried treasure in Mosman Bay, in the traditionalists were somewhat modified. From then on, I was on my own. Not knowing what to expect from child audiences, I desperately bungled in everything: chaos, fights, necks around in the dark, and even, large milk I could fit into the story. The script was written in the main, among coffee cups in Market Street Bopps.

I then enlisted the help of my friends Elsie Duxter, Alan Herbert and Zeff Winkman from Mercury, young David Northam, some acquaintances from the New Theatre in London (in retired English school) and as a last resort for the box load on protesting schoolies, brother.

The first reading at the Mosman Theatre Club was slightly disastrous. Elsie said she'd never produced a play like this before, and so me it seemed it was destined for a fate worse than death and its career would end after the third performance, if it got that far. Even the same guinea did not compensate for the embarrassment



Photo: Robert McLintock

and frustration about to descend on me. I couldn't act. I couldn't write plays. What was there left for me in the world?

What happened on the afternoon of August 14th, 1948 took us all by surprise. After a quiet and suspicious start, the intensity of the audience involvement mounted with the scenes. A friend beside me at the back of the Mountain Town Hall auditorium muttered: "Oh, my God!" and clutched her ears. Someone nearby was saying "There'll be a riot! There'll be a riot!" In Act Two, a small boy was literally rolling in the aisles yelling "I dig in overcoat, a dog in an overcoat!" (a line from the script). Nice little girls in starched organdies were jumping up and down on their seats screaming, and when it stopped the parents were about to escape, half the audience rushed to the footlights and tried to clamber on stage. Alan Herbert faltered in his delivery until they were hustled off.

There surely never had been and certainly never will be again an audience like this. They were not an undisciplined mob, the actors never lost control and the audience reaction was in context. This sort of spontaneous, wholehearted, surprised and excited reaction to something new is probably gone forever. Nothing is new to kids these days and probably nothing surprises them.

"You must be gratified" said a visiting English playwright I wasn't. I was astonished.

I wrote two other plays for the Mountain Children's Theatre, or the Children's National Theatre as it hopefully became. But by 1951 the boom was over. No "national theatre" of any sort was established and no subsidies committed. The "Golden Age" was all there, and for many of us the truth was then had begun.

But during all these 12 years, Pinter has continued to show signs of life. It has been feared everywhere, been transmitted into an overblown panic at the *Melbourn* which about in the *Lancaster Pages* viewed by overseas educationalists, produced by theatre groups from the Solomon Islands to London's East End and from Cairns to Albany, WA. It has bounced through productions by small boys at Ludlow House School, and large girls at the Parramatta Girls' Training School.

Now the *National Theatre* has transferred *Mountain Boy* to parades and its buried treasure to Clark Island in the Maroubra as part of the Festival of Sydney.

I remain astonished, and admitted to somewhat nostalgic, with memories of those brief years of hope and excitement, of some great performances and great performers, and one small nice gesture: romp for kids which came unexpectedly, was the beginning of a career. And the stage, open on the windswept beach is still burning.

# THEATRE/ACT



By Roger Pulver/Stair Rep.

## Moments of extraordinary power

### YAMASHITA

By Kyle Wilson

Interview by Roger Pulver at the Play-It-Right Theatre, Grand St. N.Y. 10014  
 Director: Roger Pulver  
 George Clooney Howard Stanley Yamashita Robert Stephens James M. Wilk Clark  
 (Professors)

Watching Roger Pulver's own production of his play *Yamashita* I found accumulated impressions of his work coalescing into an opinion: as a director he's one of the best we have, with a really fierce imagination and almost towering sense of what works. This production had some moments of extraordinary power which lifted the event to a very high plane indeed.

*Yamashita* is both original in content and elegant in form with word-lightening cinematic sequences thrusting through its surface of dialogue to reveal the true relations between characters. Its author gives it a fast, disciplined, vitally absorbing production highlighted by the occasional coup de theatre and one extraordinary performance. A key invention is a three-bladed fan revolving shoddily in the top of air of a drugstore in Japan and the USA, between Yamashita and Eisenhower cultures, the encounter of which forms the historical background. George Chaw, a melancholy academic, a pathetic hybrid of the two cultures, bedevilled by his impossible links with the old, eastern one and his desperate need to be accepted by the new, western

one, is attempting to teach Yamashita — a generalized representative of defeated Japan — but not the general — his own language.

Chaw's relations to the reputation of his past culture are ambivalent: on the one hand he wants Yamashita's support, on the other he hates him. The real relations between them are soon revealed in one of those particularly frightening and for some gratuitously cruel and excessive scenes of humiliation and denuding for which Pulver has a penchant: the roles of teacher pupil, victor/vanquished are reversed as Yamashita forces Chaw to defecate into a newspaper box, then expunges the results of this symbolic act, expressing Chaw's wretched guilt reflexively over his head.

Such symbolic cinematic sequences are the key device in the visual language Pulver has developed. In this case the meaning was clear, but elsewhere it was not: the play falls roughly into two parts as the classroom becomes a courtroom and the lesson a farcical yet frightening mock trial of General Yamashita for "crimes against humanity: mass killings of Christians and Jews and more of all for daring to attack the United States of America." Pending over this arrangement is a sub-etched trans-civilizing, bitterly modernist of Eisenhower culture, the Jewster, who has wandered in and disrupted the lesson with particular outpourings of enthusiasm and bigotry, affection for and prejudice against fellow

racist. This is an extraordinary performance by William Glosby, who scrupulously and skillfully avoids vulgarizing the character in the direction of fascist stereotypes.

In a sort of manifesto in *Theatre* (Autumn/October 1979) Pulver stated that the language of theatre has its own logic: words acquire new and different meanings, and a play makes sense only if the viewer is drawn into the internal order of the logic of the language. In *Yamashita* Pulver creates this new language, with odd juxtaposition, patches of image and echo, startling similes, all informed by his own eccentric brand of humour. Unfortunately, the nucleus of our cultural and linguistic background remains, and while the logic of his language may be transparently clear to its creator, it is also beyond us. Further, Pulver occasionally overstates his case: some of his black humour has the subtlety of a blow with a sledgehammer, the tone becomes obscenely debased.

Nonetheless, there are moments of great power: the most remarkable being a sequence in which Justice-Judge Glosby, clearly wearing a heavy of embled patriotism, smokes the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki while Chaw (another fine performance by Howard Stanley) elicits two blackboard dusters over Yamashita's head, exclaiming him to "follow!" Here the rampant symbolism of the three-bladed fan suddenly strikes fire. Despite reservations, ideas such as these make for great theatre.



Robert Stephens, William Glosby in *Yamashita*

# THEATRE/NSW



State Rep./Lucy Wagner, Exec. Editor

## Successful but not succinct

### ON OUR SELECTION

By Barry O'Connor

*On Our Selection* is a dramatization from the best of Marie Rudd by Ben Bailey. A successful comedy by George Whaley. The NIDA, Jane Mair production featured in the National Awards, opened 19 November 1979.

Director: George Whaley (Playgo): Kim Carpenter  
Mus. and Lyrics: Roma Conway. Choreographer: Keith Best (Lighting Design): Peter Smith.  
Cost. and Hair: Dennis Hooley. Props and Ward. Mary Watkins. Back. Julieanne Newbold. Sarah Young. Garry Carr. Geoffrey Bink. Joe Joe Hare. Ed. White. Nana. Heather. Sandy. Peter. John Howard. Trevor. Malcolm. John. Playgo. Pils. Group. the Bernard. Myerson. John. Nana. Old. Carr. Joe Carr. Mary. Dan. David. Jack. Robert. Hare.

(P/A's comedy)

*On Our Selection*, NIDA's mid-year success at Jane Mair, is back and playing at the Mairland for Christmas. With no claims to being a writer-director George Whaley put the whole thing together from an early twentieth-century dramatization of Marie Rudd by Ben Bailey (the original "Dad"), the four "Selection" books themselves and his own bushy-haired. Perhaps the wealth of sources proved to be an *achilles' heel* since even after some cuts in the transfer, the play is still four acts and three hours long. Hardly faithful to Rudd's characteristic economy of style. The detached and discontinuous narrative of the original book lends itself admirably to the genre of theatrical styles used in this NIDA production. After all they pioneered and defined this so-called uniquely Australian kind of theatre in the Legend of King O'Malley. *Selection* unfortunately has struck an imperfect

balance between the melodrama and the comedy, the latter and the vaudeville in this story of farming life on the Darling Downs. If there were less verbal narrative progression the flaws in the romance and the melodrama would be less obvious and less distracting.

The cost is so the music to give the production the episodic character it requires. As it is the songs and dances have been relegated to making the scene changes and ending up the warblings of Jeanette McDonald and Nelson Folly, when the romance is seen to have no life of its own. Generally speaking, too, the musical numbers are arranged and presented with an artfulness that is supposed to disguise art. This is all right as long as it doesn't descend to tedious awkwardness, and remember, to be able to

apologise Jeanette and Nelson you have to be able to sing almost as well if not better yourself. The slant between Geoffrey Rush and Jean Housden works well because it is in character at times and comically well else.

Whatever one thinks of Whaley as a playwright, his genius as a play director is undeniable. His stage business is remarkably inventive. Sarah, the Rudd's eldest daughter and a "lost rough diamond", carries on her own in order to preserve her new gloves, earned these steps under the hand pain of two romantic leads as if it were a thread of buried wire. The snake bite scene is a riot, as is the one where Chummy Jack runs over with his axe. And Dad and Mum's trying to avoid whatever happened to be told as going marvellous but at that laughable



Frances Garrow and Don Chisholm. *On Our Selection*. Photo Robert McFarlane

social habit, as well as at Chebby and Foster perhaps.

The setup is within the tradition of character acting in the best sense of the term: Don Crosby as Joseph Marriagh Rudd, the sagacious patriarch, suitably bewhiskered and absolutely believable; Kerry Walker as Mother is by turn wonderfully warm and devilishly mean, making homespun platitudes sound like Widescreen epigrams. Less happy is her doubling as Henrietta White whose excesses were not contained by the natural discipline of this fine actress. John Sympho, who doubled as the pastor and the simplicitous sister, didn't get too carried away by the license of playing the latter role in a falsetto voice. Not did Nam Hazzard yield in her growling, blinking Lili White whom she rightly portrayed as not being exactly stupid. As good old Doc, Geoffrey Rush brilliantly hangs condescension and pride on a scintilla, frame a misrecognition of homely-faced Vivianne Garra and Jon Blake got extremely fine portraits of the rougher Rudd siblings. John Howard and Julianne Newbold made the most of the love interest, and Robert Minter as a wonderfully pronounced as Cranky Jack.

On the other hand, the play and the screenplay as strong as its characterizations. Would we, as we like to see ourselves, a nation of bastards, first by blood-sucking communists, a rapacious "establishment" and a selfish government. It may or may not be accurate but it is accepted myth, and it is the risk signs of a low entertainment at the National Film Institute.

## Needs a total rethink

### SISTERS

By Robert Paige

*Artists: music and lyrics by Michael King, Ken Moffat, Jerry DeCassini, John & Maura O'Brien, Gordon and Gary Mathis, Mervyn Pines. Music: Earl Charles, Elizabeth, All Five, Jennifer Kim, Barbara Kishner, Mervyn Pines. Musicians: Peter Greening, Michael King, Alan Mathieson, Peter Morris, Mervyn Pines, Mervyn Pines.*

*Off Broadway only*

A musical called *Sisters* might conjure up a picture of the Crosby-Kaye duo and the accompanying Hollywood potpourri. Nothing could be further from the production or the intention of the Music Box Theatre.

Hint the emphasis is on the small-scale single set four performers, few costumes and studio theatre venue. The purpose seems to be to offer what is a



*All Five: Left, Charles, Ken Moffat and Mervyn Pines or Mervyn Pines.*

surrogate for all that is lacking in the usual stock-in-trade of the form. "We believe there is a mind and an audience for original Australian musicals that do not necessarily copy the formulae in the budgets of the big Broadway-type musical."

The problem is that the result looks like a well meaning, highly thought through but awkward student offering. We are asked to be concerned about four girls who ended up as nursing sisters in the Pacific war zone and ultimately prisoners of war in a Japanese camp, but whose early country town upbringing left them woefully ill-prepared for the experience.

Many of the problems (around the style) in the first act the four biographies, historically outlined in turn, are played in a mannered, pseudo-Japanese fashion. Sometimes, lots of relatives pointed on lots and umbrellas, bamboo wing flaps. For a moment one thinks ah yes, hands across the water. Australia is not a long way from South East Asia. Yet the clash between style (oriental) and subject (country town life) soon becomes an inappropriateness, especially when the style is that of these girls' eventual captors and killers. Had it all been flashback from the prison camp, perhaps.

The whole production is marred by such jarring incongruities. For instance on the jarring excuse of showing up one of the quarters suffering a near breakdown in the camp we get a dance number on The Girls in the Chevrolet. In general the songs pendulum crash between such coaching numbers as a hymn to the return of freedom, peace and justice and comic songs like "Make the Malarial Mesquite." Nowhere in the writings (here the authors

which would grip attention.

The audience should feel some empathy with the experience of the girls, but there is never the opportunity for a full response. The tendency of the musical as a form is to trivialize and sentimentalize things which this falls into headlong making it a disturbingly unworthy tribute to the people who went through WW2.

A gutsy approach to the characters might at least have given the impression of greater depth, but the actresses, largely fresh from Ensemble training, were unequal to a Julia Andrews smile and singing class teachings are no substitute for touch of feeling. Responsibility for inadequacies and repetition in the musical must one felt, be there, as the choreography of Nancy Hayes.

The set, mixing black of sea and sky, flecked with the white of sail on a sandy platform and framed by huge bamboo fans with hints of war scenes painted on, projects Anhang. Babers' richly imaginative talent with non-matrimonial design. Said that the production lacked such flair.

Mervyn Pines' original promise about small scale musicals may be true (up *The Tricorne* and *All The Jazz*), but *Sisters* overall does nothing to help establish it. It looks not like a work in progress but a rushed rewrite and expansion of the original Revenue Tracking Company, forty-minute late show in the need for public product. Though packed with ideas, what it needs now is a total rethink to find a coherent, theatrical approach, truth in the experience and a mature faithfulness in vision. At the moment it appears a thing was short of what is required for a high-class acting.



## Moments of excellence and delight

PARADISE REGAINED/NEENAW

By Anthony Barbery

*Paradise Regained* (A Rock Opera) by David Mason Co., Kevin Bennett, and Max Miffland. The Q Theatre, Perth. Opened 18 November 1979.

*Director:* Max Miffland. *Designs:* James McInnes. *Musical direction:* David Mason Co. & Kevin Bennett. *Musicians:* Hugh Chambers.

*Actors:* Robin Jeffrey, Brian Walsh, Heather Ash, the Rejims (Graham, Lawrence, Mary, Steve, Hans, Archibald, Graham), David Wilson, Mark David, Martin, Scottie, Ray, Douglas, Andrew, Robert Thompson, Paul Lynde, McInnes, David Ellis, O'Brien, Chorus, Mark Ridge, David Hay, Kathleen Little.

(Professional production)

*Set:* John Wilson. *Cost:* Music by Cy Coleman. Lyrics by Dorothy Fields. Book by Michael Bennett. Based on the play *Fun For The Money* by William Inge. Mason Co. Theatre. Opened November 1979.

*Director:* Michael Bennett. *Musical direction:* Guy Armstrong. *Choreography:* Peggy Warren. *Cost designer:* Keith Little. *Design:* Michael O'Keefe.

*Cost:* Maria, Sidney Gibson, Jerry Ryan, Paul Mayberry, David, Keith Little, Sophie, Graham, Scott. *Supporting Musicians:* Graham, Tom, Oscar, Mark Royal, David, Thomas Adams, Rod, Rod, Douglas.

(Professional)

It is difficult to find a spiritual Take in the Perth wilderness and in the Q's current *Paradise Regained* one is inclined to take with Lucifer and his Hell's Angels, who hell with goodness. Eden and St Mary's Perth for that matter. But to the point, David Mason Co., Kevin Bennett and Max Miffland co-authors of last year's *St Mary's Rock* a moving statement on the

plight of Sydney's outer western suburbs' kids-in-the-wardland have come up with another winner *Paradise Regained* is good, in fact after a lot of show starts is mostly very good and at moments excellent especially Christ's nightmare scene and Susan's song 'Paradise Lost'.

Rock operas, despite their vitality and artistic achievement, strike me as hangovers from the 1960s. Theatres reacted, at our own request and the search for a relevant 'here'. We've done it to death. And Kelly was it right again and so on. Obviously the search for rock becomes occupied more than just the waters of rock operas or today's youth and in a fast fashion society it's all in a flash of a crash course for the future. In *Paradise Regained* it smelt me that Lucifer (contra Milton) was the day. The relationship to Milton's poem seemed at best fortuitous. Maybe that was not the point and I'm happy to be corrected on that. But at various slides of supermarkets, shops, road signs, grog shops, car wash yards (all locally Perth) flashed onto the stage against your clad youths or better clad devils and wondered if the plight of young people was not up for grabs in St Mary's and Christ offered LOVE, goodness in the future, and he remembered Home to his mother's house private returned. Lucifer offered SEX, DRUGS, PAMP, POWER. Was there a message here? Since the show relied on song and would effect with no verbal narrative it was difficult to establish full characterisation for all concerned. The general weight of the show, song for song, routine for routine, musical arrangement for musical arrangement carried in Lucifer's favour.

Yes it was all high energy and fun. But if that was a 'message' it was garbled. The alternatives posed sorry-faced, clean

living kids versus glared and doted decadence, don't really offer serious alternatives to Sydney's youth who face rather grave social problems. I guess one answer is to forget about church, forget about drink, drug, parties and go to the Q to release one's energies constructively. (And I do not intend that last statement to be facetious.)

These quibbles aside it really was Mark Henderson's show. His Satan Lucifer was superb. Theatrical in both the best stage and rock sense looking for all the world like a thin-white-dude David Mason or a musical too good impossible thing, amazingly animated energy, excellent comic gesture and stance, high powered singing the stage was his. His demonic bark added him well. David Wheeler, also punk-vocalist, and the grating, saucy disco ladies Lyndee McInnes and Eiko O'Brien. Robin Jeffrey had the voice and range but lacked in stage experience. Generally all the the vocal work was excellent but the movement needs more attention. It was too impetuous, it needs to be expanded. David Mason Co.'s band played some of the tightest rock styles I've heard in many a year. The Q hopes to transfer the show to Sydney next year but back hands it would be great to see someone take the narrative here and help them out. It would be an assured success.

Alastair Duncan's *Servants* at Marion Street by comparison is a sleek small scale production of a Broadway musical play. The music is a jewel but pertinently after between Gaele Mason (Barry Gibson) a dancer with not much flourish and lawyer Jerry Ryan (Paul Mayberry) temporarily married from his wife. The fortunes of the troupe see Carol left on her own time. Jerry returned to his wife, and Gaele's dance teacher David (Keith Little) appointed assistant director to a Big Broadway choreographer. There a little to fault in this production. Murray Gibson is very much at ease with the four foot right Gaele comedy and song are very much her strengths and she offers some very delightful moments. Paul Mayberry and Keith Little take their parts with ease. Thomas Adams carried many of the vocal harmonies with skill. Michael O'Keefe carried the limited stage space well to create the various scenes.

But as with the Q, limited stage space affected some of the dance routines by cluttering and subdividing. This is not a criticism of Peggy Wilson or Keith Little's work but more a matter that one would have liked to see the very capable one be able to be more expansive. While the show was well paced I must admit I preferred the new energy of the Q's *Paradise Regained* and while that is really a matter of personal taste not concern I should add that I dislike rock operas.



*Devil's Dress: Susan Gibson, Alan Royal and Keith Little in 'Devil's'*

# THEATRE/QLD



By Don Batchelor/State Rep

## Sheer Fun

**SHEER LUCK, HOLMES!**

*Sheer Luck: Holmes!* by Simon Wheeler. Music by Ian Dore. Lyrics by La Bode Theatre. Brisbane. Opening 23 November 1990.

Concept and director: Ross Mac. Musical director: David Pyle.

Bookend Holmes: Gregory Silverman. Dr Watson: Barry McKenna.

(CitySound: Australia)

As a popular theatre market phenomenon, *Sheer Luck: Holmes!* deserves no less recognition than Hubbard's *Darbyhede* gained from another audience, and it is likely to score just as well in royalties. A reviewer's job on such occasions is to applaud with thousands of others (in times that special insight that seems an unmitigated public appetite and serves it in a spirit of sheer fun. The calculation is so obvious in retrospect that it is easy to under-value the achievement.

With *Man of Steel*, a real up musical about Superman (now published by Playlab Press and produced more than sixty times) with the immense success of *Sliver Luck: Holmes!* and with the final musical in the heroic trilogy drafted, Dore and Dore are set to become the Rogers and Hammerstein of the high school hall.

*Sheer Luck* is superbly crafted for the annual school musical slot in every way. Simon Dore's book is an hilariously extravagant spoof of the great detective genre. The Holmes's amazing powers of deduction are likely to derive from a letter he receives in advance. The ghostly secret of Gregory Silverman is solved by a process of elimination which is not fun, but results from sets of criminals bumping one another off till none are left. Twenty-two



Gregory Silverman and Barry McKenna in *La Bode's Sheer Luck: Holmes!*

murders in all. In the process, lines and situations of such flamboyance were hurled at them that the audience is reduced to gasping with delight.

Ian Dore's music admirably reflects the spirit of the thing. It is comely, appreciative, and the concerted stuff is both well suited to the capabilities of non-specialist high school singers and always and certain to appeal to them. There are only nine numbers (a verse on death) take out the scene setting, a finale and a post-bender (Dr's diet) and you are left with several spirited and clever pieces, chief of which is the waltz and waltz "Beware the Yellow Peril".

For all its notable qualities, though, *Sheer Luck: Holmes!* was struck out of place in the main house programme of La Bode which has a reputation with critics for following a responsible and significant serious play policy. One can only, assuming that on his own-song season

Rock Bellingham wanted to balance the budget and give recognition to two fine young talents.

It is not merely a question of the show's content: there are over forty musical parts, which is an asset in a school, but caused La Bode to dig in the bottom of an acting barrel. Dedicated amateurs (a part of the fun on a speech night stage) it is an embarrassment for a playhouse with aspirations.

There were saving graces. Greg Silverman as Holmes was head and shoulders above the rest and Barry McKenna (who's not missing com) was an amusingly understated Watson.

Seven Mac's production managed the problems of so large a core and so complex a plot with clear, simple and tasteful design and direction.

However, La Bode must contribute that choosing plays is a matter of horses for courses. It's rudimentary, by Dr Watson!

# THEATRE/SA



Susan Vili/State Rep

## Blair's new play

### LAST DAY IN WOOLLOOMOOLOO

By Susan Vili

*Your Day in Woolloomooloo* by Ron Blair. Star Theatre Company. Adelaide. SA. Performance opened 30 November 1979.  
Director: Colin George. Designer: Axel Bantz. Lighting: Nigel Loring.  
Cast: Darren McArthur, Jane Riechell, Chris O'Brien, Edwin Hodgkinson, Fred Latta, Dayman, Matt Kettle, Rossmore, Fred Kavan, Blair, Dave, Esther, Leslie, Larry, Nick, Knight.  
(A Performance)

STC's contribution to the Australian Drama Festival was Ron Blair's new play *Your Day in Woolloomooloo*. Despite some heavy-handed directing, the naturalistic pace, with its touches of the bizarre is entertaining and thought-provoking.

It concerns the ledgers and the margins in a Woolloomooloo boarding-house which Dave, university-educated young landlord has decided to sell. Chris O'Brien comes to simple wartime mate, Eric, to make a stand with him and pour criticism like a rain and rainstorm, and, after a few extraordinary events, the several marriages go their separate ways.

In his treatment of the docks, Chris and Eric Blair demonstrates on one hand the rigour of a society where one man's grandfathering causes another's homelessness, and, on the other, the mutuality of these promising 'workers', who only talk and grow mazed with drink. When they do act, it is upward gathering, but one which is the natural outcome of stubborn belief in an outdated ideal. Marriage is irrelevant. As Darren, the manager,

says: "While you're planning the revolution, I'll find a broom and sweep the floor". She's the pragmatic one. 'Naive' in many ways she, nevertheless, proposes a few home truths that are not all cliché. A match for Chris and his passions.

Living alongside them are middle-aged homosexual Matt and his ingrate young friend, Larry. A different kind of marriage that, though not developed sufficiently to draw a parallel with the main theme,

indeed, I found Larry's suit impressive. Ted, too, the key to the soul and the supernatural, is skilfully drawn, though his function in the play is important.

As the two mates, Leslie Dayman and Edwin Hodgkinson were in their element, supported with aplomb by Jane Riechell as Darren. Colin George's direction was unassuming, Axel Bantz's set superb. O'Brien, though, I found words difficult to catch. Is this a fault of the theatre?



Leslie Dayman and Edwin Hodgkinson in *Your Day in Woolloomooloo*

## Sure direction

### THE MATCHMAKER

By Susan Vile

The Matchmaker by Thornton Wilder. New Theatre Company. Adelaide. SA. Performance opened 7 November 1979.

Director: Sam Douglas. Set Designer: Hugh Calder. Costume Designer: Richard Roberts. Lighting Designer: Mip Irmay. Musician: Michael Gutter. Music: Christopher YOUNG. Actors: Roger Chapman, Barbara Karpas, Tony Maclean, Joe Maclean, A. Graham, Ralph Gault, Germaine Cook, Andrew Leith, Christopher Hall, Colin Franks, Christopher Chalmers, James Malachuk, Ian Davidson, Mimi Kelly, Eric Lee, Barry Murray, Barbara Tackett, Tony Potts, Mrs. Jean Morley, Graham Williams, Mimi Lee, Chris Mahoney, Russell Penn, Barbara Karpas, Wayne Jemitt, Mrs. Flora Van Housen, Stephen Gray. (Production)

I suppose Thornton Wilder's *The Matchmaker* is best known for its realisation in film. *Brick Top* is not my favourite movie, nor is its original re-dresser play. On the one hand, the heavily moral tone is too generalized to be taken seriously, as the other comic qualities are continually undercut by this very attempt at moral seriousness.

Nevertheless, it is a marvellous vehicle for a comic actress, and there are some scenes which are as funny as you'll see anywhere.

Directing with a success that had evaded him in *The Web*, Night Nick Knight here and explored many of the comic possibilities. *The Matchmaker* Quartet kept us amused during some changes, and the scenes themselves often moved with an electric mounting towards laughs, which made for talents. More disappointing, then, to find that he was again let down by a misjudgement in casting. Lee Rameau had neither the technical facilities, nor the slight paranoia necessary to bring off the role of Dr. Levi.

As a result, our interest shifted from the matchmaker to her matches, in particular to the quartet of clerks and milliners. Colin Franks and Linden Wilkinson displayed a delicious feeling for comedy. Mistakenly, were their timing was right, tone and movement (especially latter) well co-ordinated. Colin Franks especially, enriched his character with an extraordinary sense of discovery which gave a genuine likeness to the most hackneyed plagiarists. A delight to watch even if it did mean that he had unintentionally altered the emphasis so that the play might have been more aptly named *The Story of Cornelia Black*.

## Unconvention but Not All Gutsy

AUSTRALIAN DRAMA FESTIVAL/ADLAIDE, NOVEMBER 1979

Australian Performing Group at Carriac Street at Carriac.

Popular Theatre Troupe, Balcony Theatre Stage Company, The Spire, Australian Stage Company and Dramatic AMP Theatres.

By Susan Vile

Costumed (theatrical) mingling with poster-by Shoppers' faces (flicking with punctuation, comedy, amusement). Cheers at the public coming of a good cake. The first national Australian Drama Festival had begun.

Published as a 'gassy bag of Aussie shows' the festival is aimed from the start to attract audiences other than the regular theatre-goer. Its success will not be known until the festival has had more than a week away as I write. I hope it is not indicative of overall attendance that the performance I had intended to see at APG's *Five The Shores A Run* was cancelled through lack of support.

When I did see it, it proved to be a most important feature of the festival important for the personal commitment to theatre that one senses from this group, whether they are taking tokens, striving, coffee, shelling props or acting.

It's a matter of taking risks. To move an audience from room to room, with uncomfortable seating and difficult sight-lines is a risk. To push materialist speech to the limits of intelligibility is a risk. To spill beer, break glass, smash doors, snap on cigarettes on the stage is a risk. To push carefully composed performances of a potential marriage is a risk.

Informed by hazard in this way, theatre can easily fail. When it does not it is threatening, electrifying. *Phil Motherwill's* three plays, *The Future Told*, *The Laughing Woman* and *The Stranger's Arms*, all had moments which were lost on an audience but equally combining the immediacy of madness with the precision of technique, they startled and shocked with disturbing frequency.

Just as unconventional, but in a manner hilariously bizarre, is the writing of Barry Deane, whose Groucho-like humour gains as much from audience contact as it does from precepting. Consequently, *The Women Took Show*, which he performed himself with Ross Brown, was more successful because of spent a noon slapping and quick-witted 'ad libbing' than the less



Joan MarCUS (left) and Colin Franks (*Matchmaker*). Photo: David Haffey



John Derrin at the Australian Drama Festival

flexible piece for two voices. *The Horror of the Suburban Nature Strip*

By contrast with the artists' gusto of APG, I found their self-knowledge, Stewie curiously precious. The random thought-association of their three plays hinged around necessities of the hard truth of everyday life — a better sound to the poem or novel. From their stream of consciousness only words (if from beneath the surface disorder) their images a pattern of symbols, perhaps, or connotations, which caused the material to open out and touch on truths greater than the thing itself.

This never happened. Only Robert Meldrum, in *The Poor Boy To Tell You*, was able, through accurately observed and detailed performance to lift his piece from the sphere of private musings to a product which gained from being spoken aloud and shared with an audience.

There is, however, something pretentious about a group that asks an audience to respond to own mundane thoughts only to subject it to the retelling of someone else's.

Directly unimpressive, on the other hand, was Brisbane's Popular Theatre Troupe. With unalloyed energy, precise

ensemble interplay and one extraordinary lady (Kathryn Parrill) of lugubrious voice, rolling eyes and face like rubber, they sang, acted, juggled and convoluted their way through two documentary shows.

The final, Australian, looked with nervous freshness at the progress of our northern cousin. Constructed around a number of stock figures and situations, which occurred as history was seen to repeat itself in bad light and irony. The second piece, *Sons of Wine*, on the main needs to foster Argentinian food past through repetition and central story were often side-tracked. Still, any lapses were mainly compensated by animated playing and the sensitive direction of Errol O'Neill.

Direction did nothing to help Steve J. Spurr's new play, *The Death of George Reeves*. Written with no more depth than a first draft for an extended revue sketch, it was directed by Aaron Neume for Stage Company as a heavily meaningful tragic comedy. The result: theatre at its deadliest.

Perhaps among for *The Education of Benjamin Franklin* Mark II, Spurr has repeated ingredients of that early success. Baldy, middle-aged man alone in his room, telephone the only contact with outside world, lonely because public image the opposite of private self. Only this time, the public one is all fantasy and the private conventional and ordinary. For George Reeves is the aging actor who was Superman.

Add to that the confusion of a man who has achieved the ultimate in fantasy struggling to come to terms with the existence of God, and you have the germ of a marvellous idea. But germ it remained. John Noble looked right and bawled madly with the main role. Judy Dink was a delight for some moments. There was an amazing Jesus machine and a splendid comic-book criminal effect. But anything else lost out to slack writing and ponderous pace.

C. J. Dennis could never be called slack. His unalloying ear for the rhythms and cadences of Australian speech never fails to define, as John Derrin found in his one-man show *More Than A Sentimental Mule* produced by Australian Stage Company and Decorate. The prose writings are less convincing though and the programme suffered from a variety of these as well as from a diffidence in the direction by George Whiles and Wai Chern which often left John Derrin moving about without much purpose or the reading into books. Besides, this type of programme is bound to make comparison with Robert Barnham's masterly presentation of Henry Lawson, and John Derrin does not have the verve and clarity of playing to equal that.

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David Williamson (Hamlet) and Robert Johnson (Polonius) in *OM! in Hamlet*

The OV excelled in the play-acting—both on dumb shows and verbally—and the white-painted faces and drossy costumes were impressive. But the MTC scored heavily with its ground-digger scene, with a line characterisation by Frederick Parker as First Ground-digger (making a good double with the Player King).

Reverentists and Giddensites were abashed again, and the OV's Ours looked and acted more like a hamlet (Roger Orlin) for the MTC was not helped by being on horse at the premiere—perhaps he was growing a beard? And so it became Hamlet.

David Jacob's has already been justly acclaimed internationally. His is on screens and everywhere, finding and inspiring humor throughout, daringly addressing his "To be or not to be" soliloquy direct to Ophelia, and actually reading the "What a piece of work is a man" passage straight from a book. I found it thorough, satisfying and would rank Jacob as amongst the best Hamlets I have seen.

However not far behind is John Walton who is largely on being a very reliable Hamlet indeed. Several have expressed to me the opinion that the indirect two-act is much rarer. I believe it was only the intensity of *Attenborough 2* which made this seem so. He brings a freshness and earnest eagerness to the role and without any obvious means to make sense of the soliloquy sound as if one is hearing them for the first time. In this sense the play regressed downwards at

the *Attenborough* I duly expect his Hamlet to be on a par with that of John Bell's, and Bell usually is reckoned to have been Australia's best Hamlet.

I liked the intensity of the *Attenborough 2* production—one almost felt involved in the action—but the sheer pageantry and larger scale of the OV also appealed to me. The OV was certainly assisted by the more traditional and attractive costumes and simple set and minimum of props. The water-type rehearsal clothes of the MTC—masks, hoodies and jumpers—were initially distracting.

Looking in the MTC production particularly in the early scenes—was pure (surprising for *Shakespeare*). In contrast the OV went in a rattling speed. Although playing different scenes, I doubt if the MTC's was more than that the OV's (which had more time anyway) yet the MTC production was less half an hour longer.

If comparisons are to be made, then one would like to know how much better or not the OV production which came to Australia was to the one which opened in England in April 1977. Again I can't say I understand only the Horatio and Laertes remained. And one wonders what use changes there will be when the MTC's is reproduced for the domestic theatre at the *Attenborough*. One would suggest that David Ravenwood be approached to the role of Polonius or the Claudius.

Two could, very exciting and reliable workings in the theatre. I look forward with much anticipation now to the Hamlet production downwards at the *Attenborough*.

## Success and sentiment

### TRAVELLING NORTH

By Garrie Hutchinson

*Travelling North* by David Williamson. National Theatre presented in the Melbourne Theatre Company. Melbourne. Director: Melbourne. N.T. Company. 11 October 1979.

Director: John Bell. Designer: Ian Robinson. Lighting: Peter Henderson. Stage Manager: Pauline Lee. Front: Brian Munn. Prompt: Carol Rago. Helen Jenkins. Back: Stephen John Hamilton. Herald: Graham Ross. First: David Rago. Claudius: Graham Ross. Second: John Robinson. Polonius: Robert Johnson.

*Travelling North* is, of course, a very concerning—of all Williamson's plays it should have the highest appeal to the carriage trade.

That it is travelling as far north as the West End is a recognition of its coming pleasure appeal in the honorable tradition of Ayckbourn and William Douglas Home. It is professionally crafted, full of lingo, appealing eye liners, gives opportunities for Capital A, Acting, and is, in the end, sentimental enough to give the impression of saying something important. Not for these guys cheap exploitation of sex and love, comedy, this is the genuine article, meaning comedy. No sex please, wear playclothes.

Williamson has experimented with a limited number of forms over the years, from the magic action oral drama of *One's First*, *The Club*, *The Department* (fractal naturalism) to the cycle of days and few acts in *The Remonstrated Man* if *Two Brief Summons* (simple naturalism). *Travelling North* marks a reversion that naturalism (this is the presentation of things said and done by humans with people watching) is not dependent on its being all or even most of what people say in the first in history is structural selection, so drama is selective presentation.

Thus Williamson dives right back to George Bernard and Shakespeare and reveals a genuine affinity. For a sequence of short pointed scenes, enacted over a few years. This allows him to set up subplots where only two or three people speak, in and scenes with wacked bits launched into the dark, to sketch relationships, without the obligation to elaborate and maintain, and finally to deal with more complicated characters over a period of time, rather than attempt Aristotelian fixations or numerical conservation all the time.

Structurally the whole thing is very satisfying (with the exception of a couple



Frank, above, with David Williamson's director Travelling North

of boring let's get on with the narrative seriously: the men are just the cogs in the machine and the middle class theatre audience lulled as they haven't been since *Don's Party*. In this account of the educated bourgeoisie *Travelling North* comes high in gauges of resignation. You could almost hear the audience say 'That's Me! I said something nearly as funny as that once! My daughter's just like her! And you can tell them not looking at their spouses (should that be spex)?'

Although I thoroughly enjoyed the play, admired the performances especially, Jerry Hagan and Julie Hamblin (like the women, was stabbed by a few herbs, and laughed a lot. I couldn't help but think how downright conservative the whole thing was.

Ask yourself: what's it about?

Answer: Old people can fall in love and have sex. Parents are sometimes selfish and rotten to their children, and vice versa. Comedy, reasonable old man of the type often played by George C. Scott have hearts of pure uranium. It is possible to do with wit and dignity.

The sum of these ideas as worked through in *Travelling North*, is an sentimental comedy as English as Noel

Coward. And perhaps that is the kind of writer we will have in Williamson. An Austral Noel Coward walked with, but uncompromising romantic. The rough diamond, the native truth coloured.

Perhaps success breeds sentiment but it is nevertheless curious how trivially inappropriate this is for our times. But then, maybe the theatre can once again serve as an escape hatch to fantasyland.

## Failing in love again

By Suzanne Spurrer

*Failing in Love Again* by Ian Connell. APD at the Prism Factory From Theatre Melbourne to The Opened November 19th

Director: Robin French. Music: Nigel. Musical director: Elizabeth Deane. Sound: Ross White. On: Curve Forum

Singers: Ian Connell, Tony Dermody, Di Dismore, Evelyn King, Robin McGregor (Professional)

Produced by the Literature Board. Great Ian Connell has been well-reviewed

the Prism Factory this year and her first full length piece, *Failing In Love Again*, a feminist musical has been the result.

It is described as 'not a play in the normal sense, but a theatricalisation of what could have been a concept album on the theme of the failure and disappointed consequences of romantic love'. In over an hour minutes and twenty four songs sung by five singers, three women including Connell herself, and two men, the varieties of love (platonic and otherwise) are catalogued and subjected to rigorous, critical examination. Unlike other contemporary operas, *More, Less, Clear, Supper, Dinner, Pina* — *Failing In Love Again*, does not develop particular characters for the individual performers, nor do the songs tell a story with dramatic verse. Rather, *Failing In Love* is a concert in which each of the five singers develops a distinctive musical personality and style of performance, and a biting critique of the pitfalls of romantic love is developed in the lyrics and the order and arrangement of each song. Connell describes her music as an exploration of the gap between fear and love and her lyrics are a witty and acerbic attack on what she sees as an oppressive and patriarchal definition of sexuality and love. The performers describe themselves in the opening number 'IN LOVE' as 'all casualties of Love' and they then spend the rest of the show revealing their sexual and romantic failures. Whether it is Tony Dermody, singing to the accompaniment of an inconspicuously mean, raspy, harmonica. 'I'm a weakling, I'm not a real man. My mother wore the pants and spoiled my chance at romance in a very convenient on the potential consequential role reversal of Evelyn King singing about an Ennio Ennio parody about and berating her mother to be, 'Tapp's like everyone I know and have a nice stable relationship that's nice and boring and slow. I'm just a sad messiah (who'll never be loved by the right person at the right time in the right place with the right hair), or even Robin McGregor joggling after dark, as a camp stand up go-go feminist. 'Especially now it's fashionable to be gay', they are all falling victim to the trap and letting 'organs validate their existence'.

In a succession of songs about jealousy, guilt, self doubt and the inability to be 'alone and self sufficient the causes of these meltdowns are discussed in all of these songs. 'Spah, spah it's like an old dick slow, teller you've gotta keep it in check, it's like petroleum spah, spah'. Connell focuses on the central problem, heterosexual coupling. This bracket leads into the next song, 'Housework. So Apocalyptic'. 'Housework, heterosexual love, is the more you





Jim Carroll as *Pauline Is Free*, 1990

know...the more you want to be Asexual. Trisexual, perhaps, too. The more you try the more you get. Two songs stand out in the show, as having the greatest amount of irony and self-consciousness. They are *High Heels* and *Girls Get Out Of The Ghetto*. In *High Heels*, I play a Kruze, a woman most at ease with the show stopping number, songs of "high heels, make me feel bad, high heels make me feel sexy, make me feel beautiful...make me feel like I could be" and each of the claims is matched by a response, "though they're a bit uncomfortable...though they're bad for my spine..." and the phallic question is posed "who am I dressing for anyway?" In *Girls Get Out Of The Ghetto* Jim Carroll begins to question the nature of the immediate world from which the show itself, and Carroll's writing, emerges: the monkey gripped in-bred inner subtext: "everything I say gets said in a different way by everyone else. I've been lovers with everyone I know."

The betrayal of *Pauline Is Free* could easily be summed up in the phrase: better dead than her, as it would seem that ultimately for Carroll, heterosexuality even more than repulsive passivity is the great and all encompassing evil. In the final broken of songs, Carroll tries to link the various forms of sexual expression to a frame work of capitalist exploitation and its various mass media manipulations. However this connection which for her is automatic, is not raised out in its implications and thus has a generous lackadaisical feel about it. The problems of making concise and complex political points are exacerbated by the requirements of the purely musical form of the show, nevertheless the critique of heterosexism is a highlight. There is no evidence in the lyrics to the contrary, that the sexual utopia envisaged in *Pauline Is Free* (but it's better with them do you mind if I bring a friend with me?), is not just as riddled with the same repressive attitudes and merely different preferences and goals. For another way it is critical in a show ostensibly about sexual insecurities for as many as are exercised, as many others are created in their place.

Leaving aside the ideological loopholes, what of the show? Given that it was purely and one dare hand says, simply, a musical there were undoubtedly problems in terms of finding singers who could also perform with the required naturism in action and dancers. However skilful directing by Nana Nagle and Robin Lane almost centred up these obstacles, and perhaps with a little more rehearsal the whole thing would have been as smooth and slick as it was intended. Nevertheless was a challenging enterprise on all fronts and what it lacked in stage photography it made up in energy.



# INTERNATIONAL

## Amadeus and Ola

By Irving Wardle

Huddled within a high-backed chair in the corner of a magnificent eighteenth-century drawing room, a gentleman in silk waistcoating a glass of vaporous cognac. Two other resplendent figures, a man and a girl, come rushing in in a cut and mouse game that finished up on the floor with the boy on top emitting infantile giggles and a torrent of excremental jokes. The Oliver Theatre audience began by laughing at these, and then sat on in appalled silence for the speaker — this plump, overgrown paunch with his absurd wig and obscene wack — is that classic high-cultural idiom Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. Filthy

Mozart is the filth!

The concealed observation, too, is turned to truth: his desire is that other musical notability of the Viennese Court of Joseph II, Antonio Salieri, a composer known to history not for his lousy nine operas but his alleged confession of having poisoned Mozart. There are other works on this once celebre, but Peter Shaffer's *Amadeus* differs from Paskin and the Rinsky-Korsakovs, opine in that it ignores the question of physical poison and simple professional rivalry.

Shaffer's Salieri is not the kind of venomous Italian charlatan jeeringly followed in Mozart's letters. He is a man of sober God-fearing principle who has risen in his profession to the belief that artistic achievement comes at the reward of a virtuous life. He is a pattern of eighteenth-century moral excellence: fully accepting his servant status, faithful to his padding-

like wife, intensely devoted to church and all on the assumption that he will thereby gain the privilege of glorifying his betters with his divine "palace of sound".

What happens to such a man Shaffer asks, when he encounters a lightning-bolting four-masted spirit like Mozart who spontaneously enjoys direct access to the music of the spiritual? Answer: he declares war on his angel god, and sets out to block the immortal entry by destroying his earthly spokesman. As Shaffer works the plot out, Salieri — as Court Composer — acts immovably to prevent Mozart's advancement, to drive him into the dire perils of his Viennese debts, and finally to misapprehend as the righteous patron for whom Mozart believed he was writing his own Requiem.

The final scenes of the play, furnished in Peter Hall's production with towering silhouettes, masked spectators, and bluish



Photo: Andrew G. (Constanze Mozart and Antonio Salieri) courtesy of Andrew

# INTERVIEW



Paul Scofield as Thornton in the 'Snowy Mountains'

from the misty scene of *Don Quixote* into a pinch of grotesque melodrama of which E. T. A. Hoffmann would have been proud. But neither here nor elsewhere does Shaffer relinquish his precise grip of character, period, and intellectual conflict.

Much of the play is extremely funny, especially where it involves John Thornton's affably non-conformist Emperor of Yeofre coming along, merrily, 'Merron' after *The Marriage of Figaro*; Simon Callow's Mozart, a supernaturally Cleopatra, always outwitting the equally Cleopatra, impossibly thick-skinned and Lundy, trying to put things right with bursts of Lullaby giggles; is a wonderful scene creation too painful for laughter. And Paul Scofield achieves an unerringly convincing balance between the amice young Salern and the cured old man who is telling his story to the audience of poetry.

The play strongly resembles Shaffer's *Equus*, in another duel between a cold hard intellectuality and a mysteriously inspired boy. It is a duel, in fact, that runs through all Shaffer's work, but *Amadeus* is the first play in which he has shown the intellectual sure to do full justice to it. 1979 has yielded at least one major British play.

David Laus, our resident theatrical anthropologist, has also surpassed himself in the Royal Court production of *Simone* *Ono* and *His Fatherless*, a cool examination of the New Guinea gorge with fairly ranting Western settler-colonialism of the noble savage in favour of staging an intricate collision between what

technology and tribal magic.

True, the Australian land commissioner whose one objective is to capture the natives back to plantation work, gets short shrift. But most of Laus' critics, going into demonstrating the impossibility of arguing the doctrine out of their belief that if this, are not getting cargo from their ancestors, then the whole must have within it and that the way to repair it is to open the white man's minds — as in setting all an oil drum and hammering it like a typewriter. Where Laus rises above anthropology is in the creation of his comic character. The who has served in the White Army, and now acts as the commissioner's deputy, until he discards the promise of 'progress' as a colonial fraud and joins his own people in their demands for a just inheritance. Even without Newman Beaton's superb performance, this would have pinned his point.

## The Year of the Woman

By Karl Lavett

This year of grace, 1979, might come to be recorded by historical historians as the year that 'the liberated woman', both as creator and performer, finally made some impact upon the Broadway and Off-Broadway scene. As last, plays and musicals about women or by women — or better still both categories combined — are proving less affliction victims. Producers can be ignored by theatrical producers, but not profits.

On good old national conservative Broadway the impact so far has been minimal. Although *Evita* allows Patti Lauro the opportunity to be dynamic in Harold Prince's splashy production, Eva Peron is a dubious champion to carry any kind of banner. Of more significance is the fact that TV actor Mary Tyler Moore is now replacing Tom Cook as the paralyzed woman in *Where Life A.D. Amos* 37. The English playwright, Brian Clark, says that he has changed very little except to give the play an American setting and to turn in the 'sexual suspense' by transcribing the female doctor played by Jean Matthews a

male counterpart.

While Broadway plays it safe Off-Broadway, however, is celebrating *Womanhood*. This celebration is one that has been longed for the most male radical stages of Off-Off-Broadway. But these efforts are often extreme and blunt and thus non-commercial. A current offering by a group called the Working Femmes *Seven Pys* — *My Darling*, gives you the idea.

The grandmother of present productions is *Fanny New* in its third year, this comedy about three Times cheerleaders who grow older but not wiser, is raising a ferocious lot of young authors, Jack Hedner. This has come from a prohibition of productions on regional themes and colleges throughout the US.

Another surprise success, and one with clearly didactic intentions, is the musical *I Am Gonna Be A Top Gun* *Together And Falling In On The Road*. A night-club singer with strong feminist views celebrates her thirty-ninth birthday by auditioning her act for her dismyed manager. Written by a two-woman team, Nancy Ford (quester) Gretchen Cryer (book and lyrics), it opened for a short season in The Public. Now, many months later, the show has settled into the downtown Cardozo-the-Square. Gretchen Cryer herself originally took the part of the singer, presently being sang very well by Virginia Weisell. Audiences seem quite happy to swallow the show's message, wrapped as it is in a pleasant soft-rock score.

Joseph Papp's Public Theatre has also mastered the black, post-playwright. *Koolhaa Shango* whose *Colored Gods* was a big success for The Public. Mr Shango's latest work *Spill Me 7* is a mosaic of emotions and music and dancing set in a bar frequented by black actors and actresses. The women's monologues easily outshine the men's and often sparkle with wit and imagination but these highlights cannot hide the fact that the poems of mosaic just don't fit together. Still, poetry in any form is a scarce theatrical commodity these days and the show has found an increasing audience, particularly among the young. It has already been running several months.

Literary reviewers are also in vogue. An unexpected success, now moving to a larger Off-Broadway theatre, is Marty Mann's melodrama *Gerrard Street* *Gerrard Street* *Gerrard Street*. The success of the

# NATIONAL



Madeline Phyllis Sherris and and Dale Souder in 'Getting Out'



Dale Souder and Phyllis Sherris in 'Getting Out'

principally to the performance by comedienne Phyllis Sherris (another refugee from Wisconsin). It is a tour de force of verbal and even better variety. A remarkable and creative feature of the show, incidentally, is that not one original word of Gertrude Stein's is heard. Post Sylvie Plach is also being honoured at the American Place Theatre via her correspondence to her mother, in Rose Luman Rabinberg's *Letters Home*.

But the play that best demonstrates 1979's feminist ascendancy is Marsha Norman's *Getting Out*. Ms Norman's play (first premiered in her native city of Louisville, Kentucky by one of the country's leading regional theatres, The Actors Theatre of Louisville) set in a rundown section of that city, it documents the emotional and psychological trauma of a female inmate on the first day of her

release from prison. We see the meeting as two persons: an Arlene, the young tough delinquent used to prison, and Arlene, the mature woman struggling to release herself from her past. The two conflicting identities of the same character share the stage together in interwoven scenes that are remarkable both for their tight structure and their theatrical tension. The play is a score of dramatic confrontations, choosing as the one between Arlene and Arlene as to whom will gain dominance. It has that rare combination of tough-minded realism and theatrical flair. As a film effort, it is considerable and points to Ms Norman as a dramatist of genuine talent.

Perhaps, when a play with the impact and craft of *Getting Out* plays Broadway, you'll know that the Decade of the Woman has truly arrived.

# OPERA



By David Gyger

## AO out of town

It is something of an axiom in the performing arts, and it opens perhaps more than any other manifestation thereof, that to see a company at its very best you must see it at home.

Home, for better or worse, for the Australian Opera these years being the Sydney Opera House, it follows inevitably that it is in Sydney that the company does its best work. And that axiom will hold true, by and large, even when away-from-home venues are in themselves better than home.

Familiarity with the limitations one knows, however severe they may be in themselves, tends to minimise their impact because a company knows, as it were, all the ways to get round them.

Yet the Australian Opera has a national franchise, and so long as it has that franchise it must face up to an obligation to take its physical presence to the provinces for which, in the context of course, and the whole of a continent bearing the privileged homeland of Sydney, a hinterland extending to be generous, maybe 20 miles or so from the Opera House is all directions.

There are those who would argue, sometimes quite vehemently, that the AO presence ought to promote a good deal further than the capital cities which, by and large, have been at actual parameters over the years — and even then, with only taken present in such remote capitals as Hobart and Perth.

Admittedly, an oval add to the short list of four metropolises, which comprise the whole heart of the town, Canberra, which, though it is far from metropolis in population terms, undoubtedly has more

culturally oriented people per head than any other Australian city — and also has the considerable appeal, to the planning officers of any heavily subsidised institution such as the Australian Opera, of being the national headquarters of financial assistance.

In the past two years, though, during the period when Homage-style decentralised evangelism held sway, there has been one single notable exception, Newcastle, New South Wales. Yes, there have been trips to Hobart and Launceston and even a fleeting foray into the northern heart-lands of New South Wales, in a co-operative enterprise involving the University of New England and the Queensland Theatre Orchestra.

But Newcastle was apparently chosen quite rightly as an appropriate venue for establishing an AO foothold in the province. Although it is only 160 km from Sydney, it is very much a city in its own right rather than a satellite, and it has, in the Civic Theatre, a venue reasonably suitable for modest-scale opera with orchestral backing.

It was in Newcastle and Brisbane, where the Australian Opera was presenting brief seasons of *The Marriage of Figaro* and *The Abduction from the Seraglio* before moving on to whistled seasons of *Die Meistersinger*, *The Queen of Spades* and *Madame Butterfly* in Adelaide and Melbourne to end the year, that I caught up with the company early in November.

### NEWCASTLE FIGARO

The Newcastle *Figaro* held particular interest, of course, because these two performances were the only *Figaros* presented by the AO during 1979, and, further, because they marked the debut with the national company of Fiona Macdonald, daughter of the perennial *Figaro* of that production ever since it first saw the light of day in 1971.

Even though she was only playing the minor role of Bartolomea, Fiona was noticed on hearing Fiona's promising, clear as a bell, soprano, and in scoring her interest dramatically with her father Ronald.

Otherwise, the cast was very much the one that has graced this production from the beginning. Only the baritone, as it were, invariably change from year to year, inevitably keeping pace with the ever-changing face of the chorus in which they normally dwell.

Will, then, was it the state of health of John Copley's *Figaro* after all these years? To what extent, if any, was its artistic standard compromised by being distanced from motherhood, for a mere

couple of performances on the road?

Predictably I suppose, the target answers are that *Figaro* is still in pretty good health but not the best it has ever had, and that its artistic standard was perceptibly compromised in Newcastle.

I was privileged to be sitting, for this performance, very far forward in the vaults of a theatre which has a few superb seats and a great many, particularly toward the rear of the stalls area, where the sound is seriously compromised because of the extreme overhang of the dress circle.

Having seen last year's Newcastle *Don Giovanni* from much further away, under that overhang, I cannot omit to report the difference and record my sympathy for the many patrons who had to make do with a great deal less than ideal conditions. Yet opera, like any other performing art, must be performed in available venues, which are seldom if ever ideal, and when one



John Copley, as *Figaro* in the AO's *Figaro* (Photo: B. Allen Maslen)

ventures over 160 km from home base one never then likely ever put up with less favourable conditions.

### EXCESS CHARACTERISATION

For a piece like *Figaro*, of course, the physical proximity of my seat to the stage was absolutely marvellous. It enabled me to observe every nuance of the individual characterisations... every touch of Neil Warren-Smith's sycrow in Bartolo, every lascivious smirk from Robert Gaud's Basilio.

It also blew up to brohagagan proportions every excess in the acting department, every flaw in the orchestral detail, every slight sin in the delivery of the recitative.

And moreover as a comic counterpoint as it is, *Figaro* is fiendishly difficult to bring off on stage: every one of the eleven principals must balance on a knife edge, as the acting department, between enriching his or her performance by the addition of comic detail and destroying it altogether by allowing it to topple into the abyss of vulgarity and burlesque.

And even consciously, allowing for the fact that I was sitting so close to the action I felt the Newcastle *Figaro* I attended was quite a few notches down the Mt Olympus of acting achievement from the best performances of this production I have seen in the past.

Rightly or wrongly, I felt that part of this descent was caused intentionally, or at least unintentionally, because the production knew they were in the province, feared lest some of the jokes might be overlooked.

But whether or not that was a factor it was quite clear that these performances could not be among the least flawed the production has ever had — simply because they arose from the existing together of a large number of performers (at only a

couple of performances of a long and complex work) in a relatively unsuitable venue.

#### REASONABLE FACSIMILE

Rehearsal notes cannot have been extensive, nor could even the most elephantine memory be expected to recall every detail of several of the roles without the constant joggling of recollection afforded by regular repetition. So finally, the Newcastle *Figaro* could best perhaps be described as a reasonable facsimile of the ADO's best.

Of the individual performances, John Fingleton's count and Nancy Grant's countess came across best — but as good as ever. None better than I had ever seen it.

Jennifer Bevingham's *Cherubino* was decidedly at the raucous end of her spectrum: all puppy love and rumbustiousness, bawdy and ribby-poky, never far from even a potential threat to the virtue either of the countess or Susanna as the ideal *Cherubino* must be if there was to be any dramatic action in the annals, even jealousy, her prongs at various moments

both in the count and Figaro.

Ronald Macraughan's Figaro was as dramatically and vocally flesh as ever, but seemed to suffer here and there from momentary lapses of detail — the odd loss (as of countess) false gesture, the sort of thing Cynthia Johnson's Susanna was pleasing without being definitive.

Peter Robinson conducted with a clear sense of direction, was obviously dead on the waste-lengths of the work, his principals and the orchestra. A bit more rehearsal time it seemed to me would have eliminated most or all of the slips of detail that occurred in the performance I attended.

Warm and all — and I admit I have dwelt in perhaps cruel detail on the warts of what was by and large a thoroughly acceptable *Figaro* in Newcastle — the Newcastle version of the past two years has been a thoroughly rewarding one. Two sold-out *Figaros* this year to follow two well-filled *Don Geronimos* last year have proved there is a demand for fully professional opera in the area.

Yet there is doubt if that demand will



Cynthia Johnson (*Susanna*), Ronald Macraughan (*Figaro*) and Jennifer Bevingham (*Cherubino*). Photo: William Moody.

survive even into next year for the 1988 performance schedule of the Australian Opera is revealed so far shows no Newcastle season at all. But I gather there is still a possibility that a couple of performances may be infiltrated into the schedule even now.

Certainly such whirlwind tours cost more to produce than they can hope to recoup at the box office, but more to be feared than producing the same number of performances of the same works at home here, because of the additional costs involved.

They can only be justified in the name of evangelism, and the question literally is: cultural-dollar one. Is What Price Evangelism? What is it worth to reach a few new potential opera concertgoers in the

South-east? One positive attraction of seeing the national company away from home base, and particularly in the "inner" years on its touring schedules, is that one has an opportunity to see the odd new face on occasion.

At the Newcastle *Figaro*, it was Peter Buchanan — not the first time I had seen him conduct, of course, but one of the few times this year. In Brisbane, it was David Klatm, my first. I think encounter with him at the helm of an actual performance, though he had surfaced as accompanist at operatic events organised by the NSW Friends of the opera company.

And Kram's Brisbane *Scarpia* was musically quite impressive. It actually was able to extract some real frenzy and excitement from the fledgling Queensland

performance was Donald Shanks. Gurnea, and not only because in Brisbane he is the home-town boy: it really was good, better than ever, one might almost say, despite the odd vocal flaw.

But if it was a mistake to put *Scarpia* back into the original German in Sydney after presenting it originally in English, as a more certainly was, it was ridiculous to do it in German in Brisbane.

"What a waste!" exclaimed Shanks at one particular moment during the proceedings, expressing Gurnea's frustration at the difficult-to-deal-with Rhonda. But this brief English lapse in the midst of a positive ocean of unintelligible German, to most of the audience, might equally well have expressed the frustration of the whole cast at having to carry comedy through an all but impenetrable language barrier.

The QOC's *Don Giovanni* had the advantage, of course, of being performed in the vernacular and thus being much more approachable for an audience than the AG *Scarpia*. But Paul New's portrayal of the title role was not nearly flamboyant enough, and the whole production served more to highlight the excellence displayed by the company in its three previous productions during 1979 than to provide present enjoyment.

#### ADelaide

The Australian premiere of Massenet's *Werther*, presented by State Opera in Adelaide on October 29, was a triumph all round but particularly for producer Anthony Beech and designer John Stoddart.

Steven Haas was an outstanding Werther dramatically, capturing all the tormented agony of the character marvellously, but he was a good deal less impressive at times vocally.

Cynthia Buchanan was a ravishingly beautiful Charlotte, vocally and physically, and Roger Howell a strong, impressively virginal and Albert Myer Friedman extracted a polished performance of the difficult Massenet score from the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra.

And as a minor company emerged into public view for the first time in Sydney during the period under review, with the Australian premiere season of Haydn's *L'isola Diserta*. Called the Sydney Young Opera Company, the new group has associations with the NSW Conservatorium where its inaugural season took place.

Andrew Groom conducted with style and temperament, inspiration, and Amanda Thane turned in a winning performance in the marvellous role of Virginia. The rest of the cast ranged from good to adequate, which would be the best one could say of Paul Kelly's production.



Price can get Stuck at Paula Selen in AG's *Scarpia*. Photo: William Morley.

Huawei Valley? Would it be better to bus, truck or fly them to Sydney to the venue where they would see the AG at its very best?

Clearly, there is a good deal of enthusiastic appreciation, among Newcastle opinion-leaders, of the fact that they have been so favoured by the physical presence of the AG in the past two years, some even hope for an expanded season such as Canberra gets, a week or so of two or three works in repertory.

Whether they will, or should, get it is a complex question on which some light may be thrown during the current Australian Council inquiry into opera and music theatre. But of course the final determinants of the question as above, will be money: whether subsidy funds can be found to fuel the enormously expensive organism that is a fully professional opera company, with orchestra, on tour.

#### BRISBANE NOZZARS

The other AG performance of my month was a Brisbane *Scarpia*, half of a Mount run-festival which included also a revival of the Queensland Opera Company's *Ros*

Theatre Orchestra, which exceled its own quite respectable standards by a significant degree.

It was the same *Scarpia* cast seen in Sydney earlier this year, and most were a better form than when I saw them at the Opera House. Some of them, in particular Paul Ferns' Belmonte, assisted by the smaller size of the theatre.

The only major worry was Glynis Fowler's Constante, she seemed to be having difficulty in coping vocally, did not always produce beautiful and accurate sounds even though she was clearly working very hard at it.

Anson Aasen's Figaro had loosened up dramatically from its original, reinforcing my original impression that it has been good for him to play the part because it forces him to let his hair down in a way that many romantic tenors needn't.

It was particularly interesting to see Rhonda Bruce's Rhonda so soon after her Sydney *Patience*: there was an obvious carry-over of dithy from the one to the other, and an effortless improvement in the dramatic aspects of the Rhonda.

But of course the big hit of the



# DANCE



By William Shakespeare

## Australian Dance Festival and Don Quixote

The Australian Dance Festival settled itself seriously into the Sydney Opera House this year for the second time in a year.

The various State dance companies and Limbs from New Zealand paraded their wares before the bemused glare of the audience who ran through a shopping list of what they did and didn't like and that, as they say, was that. No analysis, no follow-up, next to no cross-fertilisation and no enquiry. The Dance Seminar on the Sunday following the Festival decided, by general consensus that the Festival should and must continue in whatever changing format, but no concrete statements as to what that format should be, were forthcoming and most of the speakers were at pains to avoid the nitty gritty questions of funding, responsibility, change of venue or the areas on which the Festival should concentrate.

The State companies presented interesting and diverse works of varying quality within a strictly proscribed style format that brought the most familiar setting for them. In the event no totally new choreographic identities were presented, works performed coming from either the Artistic Directors or already tried and tested choreographers.

While I've always firmly believed that a watched pot never boils, it seems a shame that some dancers don't have enough confidence in themselves to try their hand at choreography for this all important

annual get together. Nevertheless the majority of the works were encouraging, even if no conceptual boundaries were born.

### QUEENSLAND BALLET

*Dance Space* (first in Greg's *Maiberg Series*) is the first work by the Queensland Ballet's Artistic Director Harold Collins. The overcast, inverted, a clean, unadorned flow but there was no rough stuff in my mind that could have been made of it. Collins, playing his protagonists down in an open space that was suspiciously close to *Dances at a Gathering* territory, fashioned for them and their amiable "seagulls" a fairly basic series of rolling, swishing, enfilades looking for a lyric momentum and an emotional backbone. But they didn't find them and the work became colorless as a result.

With its single, stylized tree as a background, the very experiments of the new-moment and the rustic costumes, one could have expected the stamp of character dance, but the pace floated along on an insubstantial, vague one-dimensional level of clean, classroom steps. One could feel that these dancers wanted to break out into a wider world, that the wally winds were trying to convince but Collins' choreographic dramatic tendency disallowed all that and his own extremely precise, betrayed itself. The work disappeared into an ambient jumble of entries, patterning, promenades and exits.

The dancers, all of them musically machine, tried to articulate their roles as best they could, but they kept running into the wall of unarticulated intention and for all their vigor couldn't see the point. That did, however, by virtue of their ensemble conviction save the more varied and prestigious moments in Norman Hall's *Floating Bush*.

The work, basically a "fish ballet" dressed itself up in Alan Brinkman's beloved love poem "And God created Whales", a quote from some Japanese poets with notes about Japan's invaded intention to give a gloss of learned literacy, chic over and above its commonplace theme of schools of fish chased apart by man-eating sharks. As these women really, any specific Japanese in the choreography the audience wouldn't have had a clue about the implications it a hadn't been for the programme note.

The dancers, whether swaying limn suspended rope (an interesting but underused innovation) or gliding about

in unimagined, positive movements, gave the work a great, dramatic, swirling flourish, but they (again) could have been given more material to work with, perhaps something like the abstraction of aquatic movement that translates reality rather than just copying it. As it was *Floating World* essentially finished about fifteen minutes before it actually did, the rest was padding.

### AUSTRALIAN DANCE THEATRE

There was no padding in ADT's *Leviathan* whatsoever, and the work could just ground as one of the most powerful in the company's repertoire and one of Christopher Bruce's most intense and dramatic works. It has a place in his oeuvre along with *Steel Aspects* and *Broken*, a human environment which pulsates with a peace and no true resolution is ever reached.

*Leviathan* (set to Morton Sobornack's *The Wolf And*) is a double barrelled work. It can be seen as a hybrid marriage of the *Theros* and *Aradine* story, a myth married physical with its "Aion" poses, clashing diagonals, tight angles and dancers galloping through ever diminishing corridors. It is also a spiritual labyrinth of the mind, a dark territory where the heroic male, upon victorious need to blue and whose whole aspects of soulless, are pulled into question.

John Black's *Anger* (set to the Schubert piece of the same name) is a beautiful idiom of dance in a cool, serene landscape. Unfortunately it is all made of a machine, elegant, graceful-like but totally vacant. Its setting given in an extended pen de deau of drapage, screens and rather *Achilles* an-walls.

### WA BALLET

Christine Pearson's piece of *Bucolic* (libretto by the West Australian Ballet's Catherine Harding) started off with plenty of unforced beauty quite but gradually started wandering around itself ending up unengaged and overplayed. Its mostly collection of brought presents, gathered together to look over the stage for Catherine's nymphs were one-dimensional and other extremely heavy or gawdies. What was rewarding was the way Pearson got these arch poets doing something even while they were idling, which gave the whole work a lively wave of spontaneity, and comments like, as if all the ballet presents had crowded into Girdle's house for a knowing.

Wilkinson's *Concerto* between kept getting in the way of my enjoyment of

Harry Mizsland's *Speed* (both works are set to the Bach *Double Minuet* Concerto) but I could still appreciate the way he captured the prancing rhythms and soaring instrumental lines to delineate his choreography of floor turns, crisp footwork and stretches. It was a highly unforged piece that showed all the WAB dancers excellently. Each matched as it was to their corporate ability.

## LEMBIS

The Lembis company from New Zealand was noisy and egotistical, but that was about all. Mari Jane O'Rourke Ganser had more developed segments than Jamieson's. Her work used movement in a carefully fixed way to expound theme while Jamieson's piece unfolded steps to give it a life.

Jamieson, at the Dance Seminar, harangued us all about the Australian companies' elision in using "classical" music and movement. If they wanted to capture a young audience he said, these companies should use ritmos and ideas that were "relevant" to that audience. Well, fine if a choreographer wants to use rock music for his work (let's cast a vote over the "relevant" ideas whenever they may be). Primarily a choreographer should not worry about his audience when he creates a

work, the music and ideas should be suitable and relevant only for him and his ballet. To dictate that rock music be chosen in modern dance is just whimpering and snobbish as insisting on the classical.

Lembis have brought up a lovely Kirov following with their jazz rock ballets and I wish them well. I have a feeling however that if they ever try to develop beyond this aspect (which they must if they want to grow), their "with it" manner may be their downfall and their present audience could well evaporate, having been led a country-club, hand-scratched and unprepared for new directions.

One thing cannot be denied about the Festival as a whole, however, and that is that it must continue in whatever guise. It must also broaden its outlook and widen its field of horizons. The State companies' greatest big fear is isolation and the Festival helps bridge that gap. But the works at a Festival must not be performed in isolation; they must be followed-up, concentrated analysis and discussion. That is really what the Festival is for.

## AB'S DON QUIXOTE

The big, bold colours and sweeping poetry that were always a part of the Australian Ballet's *Don Quixote* are still there two years after the work was

premiered. The manner and character touches that gave it a deeper power, however, have nearly all been washed away. The ballet looks more of a nightgatchwork, everything I see in these fiddly amendments and additions that Sorey-Jet stuffed into the work, supplying missing moments at every turn, expose the seams and fabric of Petipa's structure many saw that was apparent years ago.

Ballet music is a rocky animal, especially when the performers aren't versed in the intricacies, but it is an indispensable device for a 19th century ballet. It provides the only connecting thread on which the tango of dance set pieces can be safely, safely, riding. The Australian Ballet cuts, even when they did occasionally handle the music has adequately. In them all drop when it came to the dancing part so that all those little character intentions that give a masterpiece work like *Don Quixote* its unique flavour were left for dead.

I saw three casts in the present season and while all of them contained something different in terms of actual dancing, there was a general monotony of attack and ferocity of characterisation.

The opening night of Nelson Cox and Christine Walsh had a human ease (especially in the case of Cox) but I could never believe them as lovers, nor as the best bit Spanish. Cox filled his variations



Bob Powell as Don Quixote in the AB's 1980 *Quixote*. Photo: Bob Hartman



Kristin Cox and Christine Bunch in the AB's *Don Quixote*. Photo: Bruce Goss

with some technical embellishments with a busy, swirling gallop, and turned the big pas de deux in the right direction, but practically, nothing could be read into his dancing. Christine Walsh as Kati was dominant and stonier throughout as she was bored by the whole affair.

Terre Power and Paul de Maussion recently promoted to principal roles danced the lead roles for the first time ever in a second cast and all things considered did a good job of it. There weren't any tricks, elaborations or transitions in De Maussion's solos and the pas de deux were somewhat simplified, but there was some hinting of lachrymancy and negativity when they danced.

Terre Power has a silky, flexible spine and wonderfully stretched extremities but allegro dancing gives her trouble. In both Acts 1 and 3 her variations tended to get glistered half way through but in the lovers' duet in Act 2 she gave a water-arching amplitude to the movement that convincingly conveyed her love for Basilio. Perhaps she was not still from nerves in Act 1.

She got continuous support from de Maussion, however, which gave the whole evening a lift. Although de Maussion's solo were simplified, he looked good in them and that was far better than looking in

intricate variation enchain that would make him look bad. He has a secure musical style but should give more attention to his balance, phrasing and port de bras, there was an unconvincing tendency in times to falter in mid movement which depleted the image of its edge.

The third cast of Christine Walsh and Gary Norman looked very perfunctory. No commitment to either the story or each other and the Act 1 duet was wildly rearranged. This ruined the real execution communicated such to the rest of the cast with the result that Rita McNiel's *Expedition*, Lynette Mann's *Seven Dances* and Stephanie Torris's *Gipsy*, they were dreadfully limp.

None of the performers in the tale role (Brian Ashbridge or Joseph Barnwell) got beyond a vague sketchiness of the part, one missed Sir Robert Helgman's acting John Ashbridge at times. In virtue of his subdued manner suggested the Knight of the Dotted Countenance, but he never was anything approaching the sad and marginally idealistic character that Don Quixote should be.

The Enchanted Garden of the Dravids serves the same focus and purpose in *Don Quixote* does the Kingdom of the Shades scene in *The Merchant*. It is a timeless, ethereal realm of perfection symbolised by the

European symmetry of its layout. The music may be pure Bern-Hall company but that doesn't change the supracosmic beauty of the allegory.

Jeanne Michel was the queen of the Dravids at all the performances I saw and she saved the part to perfection, just as she did *Trayer* in last year's *Coppelia*. They are both soft, lively parts and her wide, seamless, fluidly articulated movement by that immense shabbier lace ideal Michel owns her technique finds her placement and uses them as a point of focus in sweeping surely and economically between points, which is one description of perfect grace. Her solo, with its arm extension was up on a single thread of silk. She has the long precise image of Suzanne Farrell and the tender poise of an Antonette Sablos.

It remains to be seen whether she is good in other roles (character or dramatic) but no doubt we will have the opportunity to judge in due course. Suffice it to say that the precision of the corps de ballet and the beauty of Michel made this scene one of the most sensual and exquisite points of dancing I've seen from the AB for some time, and it made the whole ballet worthwhile.

Now, when are they going to mount the *Admission to the Shades*?

# DESIGN

## Kenneth Rowell: Design for living — in a castle.

By Pamela Ruskin

In 1990, designer Kenneth Rowell left Australia for London on a year's British Council scholarship. He had been preceded a year earlier by designer London Smithhill. A few years later, John Truscott took off to America and Barry Kay went to London. These four young Australians all made it to the top as designers for theatre, ballet, opera, and in Truscott's case, film. It says a great deal for the recognition of talent in this country that they represent four success stories. There are today several designers working in Australia who would have gone on such and achieved, I'm sure, the same success of conditions here today, were as bleak as they were in the fifties and early sixties. Fortunately for all of us, they are not.

It is this changing condition of the performing arts in Australia since he left for London that inspires Kenneth Rowell, visiting Australia to design his fourth production for the Victorian State Opera. It is Rossini's lesser known work, *Count On*, his first wholly original French opera, a comedy that he composed in 1828 with a libretto by Scribe and Delisle-Poirson.

Says Rowell, "When I left Australia, there was very little scope and even less money for designers. What was even more frustrating was the lack of workshops and technicians to carry out set and costume designs. One of the great pleasures for me when I got to England was to work with people with these special skills. Now I find them here in Australia. We have here first class technicians and excellent workshops and the making of sets and costumes is first rate. In the old days, I had to do much of the work myself but now I only have to explain what is needed and supervise the work. The



team of the Victorian State Opera which is made up of only four people, to be augmented by another two a little later, is doing a superb job."

Supervising wardrobe and sets is what brought Rowell back to Melbourne in early October with his designs and the model he has made for the set of *Count On*. He remained for three weeks and returned again in January to see how the work of translating his designs into actual costumes and a full-size set was progressing and to watch over costume fittings and the setting up of the set to see that it works. It is a case of bridging the gap between theory and practice.

Ollenbush's *La Belle Helene* was Rowell's first production design for what was then called the Victoria Opera Company, the name being changed in 1978. This was a small budget affair but delighted, and a tribute to the designer's ingenuity. Next came *Polvere and Melchior* with a slightly larger budget, followed by the rather disappointing production from many points of view, of *Orpheus in the Underworld*. That was in 1979 with a much expanded budget, but still very small by Australian Opera or most overseas standards. *Count On* is a much more elaborate production with a more generous budget but designers generally seem to regard

their budgets as minimal and consider that they have pared their needs to the bone — and Kenneth Rowell is no exception. Nevertheless, with the prospect of the Victorian Arts Centre before it, the Victorian State Opera has to prove now in the quality of its productions both musically and visually and *Count On*, with its fairy-tale setting and its cast of elaborately dressed nobles and ladies, must look rich and beautiful and that costs money.

Rowell's set model for *Count On* is really exquisite. With some final research, it took him a month to make. "I've tried to absorb the essence of the period rather than copy it. In fact the opera is set in the early 14th century but the clothes then were rather rough and crude so I've based my designs on 14th century costumes, which are still medieval but much more elegant and beautiful. To capture this period I've based my designs on 14th century illuminated manuscripts and tapestries. For three months, I worked intermittently on the opera researching the architecture and costumes.

The castle grounds are enclosed in walls that are a transparent grille ornamented with fleur de lys, and against them is a magic garden of delicate shrubs and trees. The first an-

(Continued page 12)

# ADMINISTRATION

## Inspiration or encumbrance?

By Elizabeth Sweeting

"The state of the arts" seems to be a topic always good for newspaper articles and the attention of the media, particularly when they see occasion to deplore it. This is understandable by reason of the age-old criterion of calamity being newsworthy while unobtrusive steady success attracts no attention till lightning strikes. Then the occasional failures can easily be generalised into prevailing malaise debilitating to the whole body artistic, not to say politic.

To counter this, perhaps we in the arts should be less impossibly defensive and take a good look to see if we can discern the truth in the hysteria. In recent times, we must admit that a dominant theme, wrangles and wangles in the administrative area, is certainly not to our credit. An example of such publicity came from Sir Robert Helpman in an interview with the Adelaide *Advertiser's* Arts Editor on Saturday 30 June 1979. He expressed his view in his inimitably colourful way about "administrators thinking they are artists and general managers thinking they are God, inducing Arts Boards of enthusiastic amateurs".

This should cause us to think hard, in the light of other criticisms and, more importantly, other disasters, about the implied blurring of the definitions and duties of the key figures in the situation. Do they always remember that they are there essentially to support the arts, to enable the creator to reach and communicate with their audiences, viewers and users, not to confuse this all important purpose by administrative muddling and meddling? Thirty years fortunate experience as an administrator working with gifted artistic dreamers and helpful boards in the conduct of an opera company, an international festival and a lively repertory theatre

in England went a mixed programme having a fine professional company at the core has convinced me that creative hampers for the common purpose is perfectly possible and an impossible dream. The artistic and administrative sides of the arts are inextricably complementary. They are a formidable combination provided that they operate within their territorial limits, making appropriate contributions, with a bit of give and take on both sides, to the corporate purpose.

What, then, are these territorial limits? They can be quite briefly sound. There is basic truth in Sir Robert's dictum that "every great and successful company in the world has been run by just one individual" (think of Balanchine, Radcliff Burg, Joffrey). It would not be difficult to think of names associated with notable artistic enterprises in Australia, and they would be those of the creative individuals whose vision and dynamism has given the achievement an image so that the image conjures up the name, and vice-versa. The role of the Artistic Director is easily identifiable, the visionary, the instigator, with a driving purpose.

We have to look again at the word "run" used by Sir Robert. Unfortunately he was more straightforward in the days of Balanchine and his like. They could combine the roles and practice of artistic director, administrator, guide, philosopher, friend, fund-raiser and policy maker, and so become benevolent autocrats (perhaps the most satisfactory form of government?). The facts of life today make it impossible to go it alone in the grand manner. The arts are enmeshed in the paraphernalia of government funding, for instance. They have to be run in a quasi-democratic manner, set up on the sometimes not entirely appropriate models of business practice, with Boards, committees, "experts" to run each department, with the consequent involvement of a little army of people with different training, background and, above all, attitude. It is not surprising that among so many there are some who find themselves cast for parts in a continuing drama

without rehearsal, of which they understand neither plot nor purpose. They do not know whether they are Hamlet, Horatio or the ghost of Hamlet's father, so they say roles other than their own and punch each other's lines. It is no wonder that the plot is murky.

To return to the more mundane, let me re-state the principle that the Artistic Director, though he can no longer "run" the whole thing, is of paramount importance. But he too must be aware of the limitations of his role and of the administrative network which is not an elephant trap but a safety net as for a high-wire walker. So we come to the Administrator who wields the net. He must share the mission of the Artistic Director and translate it into practical terms. He must impart it to the support staff and ensure that they are developing their skills and training to the corporate purpose.

Board members see perhaps the most confused about their roles. Too often no-one has spelt out their manifold responsibilities in legal, professional and personal detail. They cannot always be wholly blamed for interference, damping of artistic aspiration, lack of communication, lack of comprehension, but they too must be aware of these relationships in the microcosm. This understanding like that which has to be nurtured in the staff structure can finally depend on the right relationship between Artists, Director and Administrator. Their correct combination can dispel the myth of the mad army heli-hoed on taking the company at break-neck speed to the bankruptcy court or shocking the bourgeois. The Board can then be supportive, not repressive.

The Battle of the Board Room and the power struggle between Artistic Director and Administrator have hit the headlines so often that "administration" is now a boggy word. The notion of training in arts administration may unfortunately also be regarded with suspicion as appearing to aggrandise the role of the dreaded bureaucracy who gobbles the artistic director alive. Even from it, the confusions, the uncertainties, the

recommendations, point unambiguously to the need for trained "creative" administrators. Given the basic enthusiasm for the arts which makes a good administrator tick, he can and should acquire the most technical skills available to enable him to give full support to the artistic enterprise, knowing how not to overweigh his opinions, how to make the best use of available and desirable resources, human, material and financial, how to seek and use expert advice, how to communicate, how to read the signs of social and economic change and respond to them and to their influence on his company and his audience. All this in the context of a more sophisticated but not necessarily equated with ignorance but appropriate to the corporate purpose and resources.

These skills cannot now, to be fully effective, be picked up by trial and error. They have to be imparted by experts in the fiercely competitive worlds of the arts and of business, which are drawing ever closer together for mutual benefit and which must be able to respect each other.

Arts administration training as a specialist subject has long been a *sine qua non* in the United States, notably at Harvard, but in hundreds of other universities and their business schools, in Canada and in Britain where they were set up at the instigation of the Arts Council of Great Britain, about fifteen years ago and are going from strength to strength. Having been associated all that time with them as planner, teacher and chairman it was heartening to be Chairman of a conference on the subject held in Adelaide in 1972, from which strong recommendations emanated for the setting up of training in Australia. When I came back briefly in 1974, my enthusiasm was rather dampened by the lack of any such initiative, but I am happy to report that, as the result of an invitation from the Arts Development Division of the South Australian Government to return in 1976 to do something about it, such a course is now alive and well and happening in Adelaide, in its second year.

Drawing on the models of other countries, but backed by research and testing experience and opinion in the special conditions of Australia it is a Graduate Diploma Course in Business Administration (Arts) in the School of

Business Administration, SA Institute of Technology. It is open to graduates and to others with equivalent experience or qualifications in the arts or other professions, and entry is restricted to a small number. Subjects such as management accounting, industrial relations, organisational behaviour and management framework are shared with business administration students and are taught by the specialist staff of the Institute, who use examples and case-studies from the arts as well as those drawn from business practice. In addition, there are special arts-oriented subjects, covering topics such as the *management*, *production* and *supply* of the arts, theory and practice of subsidy and private funding, etc in Australia, the U.S., Canada, Britain and elsewhere; the administration of arts organisations, including music, the visual arts and crafts, community arts etc, with staff structures, policy making, financial planning and control etc. These are taught by seminar and discussion with the arts administration students by the Course Director, at present myself, and by practitioners from arts organisations in Australia and visiting from overseas. There is emphasis throughout on what is actually happening in the arts world in Australia and overseas, with discussion on particular events as they occur. This is also reinforced by periods of secondment to arts organisations, where the student is expected to take an active part or perform a particular job required by the host organisation, not so he a passive observer.

The content and methods are being adjusted as staff and students learn by experience, and we all hope the course, through its teaching not only of skills but of attitudes, may be a help in righting some of the faults in the system, which as Sir Robert sees them come about "simply because managers interfere with artists' decision and administrators don't confine themselves to administering."

A final commercial detail of the course is available from Thorburn Swelling—School of Business Administration, SA Institute of Technology, North Terrace, Adelaide, SA, 5000.

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shows the exterior of the castle which involves for the second act in the interior. The castle has a golden appearance with copper-green towers from which pennants fly. It is covered with grids that give a light, delicate appearance to it. There is a moat and a drawbridge with a grid behind it and there is a paragon around which the inhabitants promenade. In the garden, there is a charming hermitage to one side and on the other an ornamental



tree. The interior shows the same use of grids, round the side of the staircase, the side pieces, the base of the full-size mirror with a steel and also on the stem of the large mandelabra. The grids are seen in the illuminated manuscripts of the period and give an effect of lightness and a magical other-world romanticism.

When the crusaders return, there are two flats in a grid fleur-de-lis design which hang high from the back of the castle's great hall with the banners of the knight's engine making a brave display. The crusaders sail on around the moat in a beautiful little ship, the hull covered in the grid design and with sails furled. This is fairy-tale stuff, not realism so one doesn't ask how a moat is open to river winds for the ship to sail in—all things are possible in such a tale.

For *Count Olaf*, Rowell has designed some eighty-eight costumes, most of them sumptuous and elaborate. There are even two charges that are richly expensively and provide seats for jousting knights. These are neither of horse flesh nor humanlike but stationary and made of polystyrene with cloths richly

(Continued page 51)

# BOOKS



By Bob Adams

## A framework for the future

**The Economics of the Performing Arts** by C.B. Theohy and G.A. Withers. Edward Arnold (Australia) rep \$37.50

This is a significant book. Here we have the most comprehensive theoretical analysis of the economic basis of the live performing arts to date, plus a detailed examination of the empirical data, plus a discussion of the issues raised for public policy and copyright administration. It is in three parts: economic theory, then facts, then policy issues. The facts and policy issues are rooted in the Australian experience, with extensive reference to the United States, Great Britain, Canada and to a lesser extent New Zealand.

I took three times as long as expected to complete this work; it has been well worth the wait. All power to the authors and their "linguaflexing" wits! This book is not easy reading; it is not meant to be. It sets the economic framework for the future in the performing arts, especially in Australia.

It is in many ways an economics text. Let us hope it will be used in our tertiary institutions so that the next generation of economists and business managers will have an understanding of the functioning and importance of non-profit arts organisations in our society.

Nevertheless, to provide accessibility to the general reader, the first section in every chapter is in non-technical language, although it includes the results of the formal analysis. The second section is the formal analysis for the professional

economist.

Part I looks at the theory of the firm, demand for the product, the nature of the industry and patronage.

It clearly distinguishes the nature and behaviour of commercial and non-profit companies, and the implications for subsidy. Subsidy to commercial organisations should be on a project basis if it is not simply to add to profits, whereas the non-profit company objectives of quality and quantity will best be served by lump-sum subsidy, supplemented by selective consumer subsidies where a broadening of the demand base is seen as socially desirable. A broadening of the demand base may also provide a more secure financial situation in the long run.

Changes in price, the price of complementary activities and substitutes, income, leisure time, the cost of leisure, and education are all factors influencing demand for the performing arts. In the short term demand is seen as likely to be relatively unresponsive to changes in price.



because it is, in some respects an acquired and additive taste. This also underlines the importance of education for the long term.

The major problem of the industry is seen as the entry-widening gap between costs and earned revenue because of the limited applicability of technological change to the performing arts. This can be staved off temporarily by various one-off measures, but only temporarily.

The non-profit sector has the further

problem of an inability to attract and hold sufficient able managers. Personal resources and greater scope for entrepreneurial activity could help overcome this. Organisations need a stronger capital base to make this possible. Effective training is also a critical need.

Part II examines empirical data for the twelve years 1964-75. The data are insufficiently complete across categories and countries for the coverage to be as thorough and systematic as may be desired. But it is a marvellous start.

It indicates that audience for the live performing arts is much larger than commonly supposed. Roughly one-quarter of Australians and Americans over 14 years of age are reached by the professional live performing arts each year.

Both performers and audiences are more highly educated than the community average, and education would seem to be a more significant factor than income in determining likely attendance. This suggests that future demand of the arts become more central in the schools' curriculum but not as a simple result of increased prosperity.

Australian data confirms the likelihood of an increasing real income gap highlighting the need for greater increased income support from all sources. The national government is currently the primary source of funds in all countries other than the United States.

Part III analyses the social benefits arising from performing arts activities over and above the direct benefit to a member of the audience, and looks at the implications for insurance policy. It underlines the solid economic justification for government assistance because of market inefficiencies in the valuation of external benefits, and because of merit good considerations.

The Conclusion discusses important Reports from three countries. It points to the confused logic of the Australian Industries Assistance Commission (IAC) Report on "Assistance to the Performing Arts" (1977) which after accepting the consumer externality argument as the principle ground for subsidy recommended a revolutionary rearrangement of subsidy which ignored this principle ground.

The authors focus on the objectives of the patron as the reason for subsidy, not the financial plight of the companies. In particular the economic arguments for government support suggest the following objectives: the definition of national identity, the promotion of social progress, the widespread application of the arts, the pursuit of excellence, the encouragement

of participation, and the development of education. Given that resources are limited, the relative emphasis on quality and quantity may well vary over time, but the pursuit of quantity without reference to quality (the IAC approach) would seem to be totally self-defeating. The IAC failed to heed the warning of the economist Lord Keynes in "Art and the State" 1936, "experience has plainly demonstrated that these things cannot be successfully carried on if they depend on the *accrual* of profits and financial success". This is just one of the many very excellent quotations throughout the book.

Another quotation from Lord Keynes the year before his appointment in 1946 as first chairman of the Arts Council of Great Britain, to my mind sums up the achievements of this book. "I give you" he said "the toast of the Royal Economic Society, of economists and economists who are trusted not of civilisation, but of the possibility of civilisation". Throsby and Withers have given us a brilliant basis for assessment and planning, to open up these possibilities through the performing arts.

## Best of British

By John McCallum

Are the British best at theatre, as they often say? Trevor Nunn in his introduction to *Royal Shakespeare Company 1978* says that he would like to revive the World Theatre Season to see after a particularly good Latvian production he saw in Riga. Certainly there can be few companies in the world which could produce a large format 160 page year book of their work, and have it so fascinating.

The RSC now has four theatres - the RST and The Other Place at Stratford, and the Aldwych and Warehouse in London. They have an annual season in Newcastle Upon Tyne and a small touring company. Their repertoire is rich and varied - in 1978 they did 35 productions, including eleven Shakespeares. Their new London theatre centre, the Barbican (already famous before it's even built) will open this year, and they have plans for a third venue at Stratford, an Elizabethan-style space. Their policy of letting work on new plays find their producers of the classics and Shakespeare, and their distinctive textual explorations, have given them a style of their own which enable them to talk confidently in this book about "great variety of theatre".

RSC 1978 is an excellent account of the work of a great company, listing productions, details and giving reports of the critical responses. Numerous, usually small, black and white photographs

sometimes give some idea of the visual impact of the productions. The book, by extension, gives considerable insight into British attitudes to theatre in general, if only because the RSC represents such a large slab of it. There is also a certain glossing in the summaries of the events, whose insights are acknowledged when evaluatory but whose well-edged commentaries is scorned when unfavourable. Bernard Levin seems to be particularly unpopular.

A rather different sort of company is Intero-Action, which includes the Ambience Lunch Hour Theatre Club and Dogg's Troupe (jazz and children's theatre) under the direction of E D Brown. For his children's writing Brown uses the penname Prof R L Dogg, so that when in years to come academics are



looking through their card indices "in their never ending search for performance" they will find his children's doggerel rhymes listed under Dogg R L. When Tom Stoppard heard this he thought that anyone who could wait so long for a bad pun to explode deserved encouragement, so he wrote them a play, *Dogg's Own Pet*. This is, of course, an answer of Dogg's Troupe and once you read the play it all gets much worse.

*Dogg's Own Pet* is one of *Ten Of The Best*, a collection of the best British short plays from the Almost Free Theatre Intero-Action's theatrical base. It is an excellent collection, with a wide variety of styles and material for groups looking for good characters. For street theatre groups there is another marvellous play by Stoppard, *The Plover Menace Hamlet*, which is just that it is designed for performance in public places and startlingly manages to capture the spirit of the somewhat longer original. It has an anecdote which manages to condense *Hamlet* into two minutes not quite as successfully but very funny.

Another volume of Ambience Almost Free playscripts is *Disorientated Acts*. This

contains plays from the Almost Free's Gay Season in 1975. It is a very impressive collection, not least because three of the five plays are by Robert Patrick, one of 40-60 Broadway's most prolific playwrights for the last twenty years. For specific case plays they are refreshingly self-conscious - (except perhaps for *Thinking Straight* by Laurence Collinsen) who used to write plays in this country). This is one of those plays about playwrights writing plays.

This month there are also a number of books which need assessing rather than comment. *Take Four Forevers* by Shirley Andrews is an elegantly produced book about the history of traditional social dancing in Australia, from cover to cover. It also gives instructions for 68 dances and includes for 29 of them.

*Berkeley Stories* is a rather contrived collection of anecdotes and sayings of one of England's most famous wits. Like many such collections the overall impression is very disappointing - it's better to stick to the one or two Treasury witesses which do the rounds. Two recent volumes in the Methuen Master Playscripts series are *Behn: The Complete Plays and Some Plays* (The latter contains, *Leaz, The Sea, Narves, Road To The Deep North, Black Mass and Passion*).

Special mention should be made of the publications of the Australian Youth Performing Arts Association (AYPAA) with which many readers will be familiar. They have published a *Directory of Youth Performing Arts in Australia* (compiled by Margaret Lyash), *Youth Performing Arts in Australia 1975-1977* (by Anne Godfrey Smith) and *A Directory of Published and Unpublished Scripts in Australia* (compiled by Margaret Lyash). Although these are naturally rapidly becoming out of date they are useful reference works. AYPAA now also publish a regular journal (and a very large and comprehensive one at 1940) called *Lookdown*. These publications are available from AYPAA c/o Theatre Workshop, University of Sydney, NSW 2006.

**Royal Shakespeare Company 1978** 170 Publications in ass with RSC

**Ten Of The Best British Short Plays** Ambience Almost Free Playscripts 3 Intero-Action Imprint RRP \$7.50

**Homosexual Acts** Ambience Almost Free Playscripts 1 Intero-Action Imprint *Take Your Partners* by Shirley Andrews, Hyland House RRP \$15.00

**Berham Stories** Hawthorn, RRP \$11.20

**A Directory of Youth Performing Arts in Australia, A Directory of Published and Unpublished Play Scripts in Australia, Youth Performing Arts in Australia 1975-1977** AYPAA



# FILM



By Elizabeth Riddell

## Thirst — fails to entertain

*Thirst*, by F. G. Film Productions, is in the category of light films which do not involve major catastrophes such as fire, plague, flood, avalanches or the commission of enough people gone to lunch on a nation. The light elements are on a personal physical and mental level of observation. In *Thirst* a young woman is kidnapped by the leaders of the Hyena Brotherhood and the most noticeable prop is a large quantity of liquid that looks like blood, drunk as freely as wine. Woman actually being refueled from one lot of protein to be drunk in another lot — all the Blood Fumes — it circulates through kilometres of transparent tubing before being decanted into facemasks of red curtains which are then taken over by the mafia — or blood-s.

Being that confined to a small scale *Thirst* wins *The Favourite and Queen Jane* (V and indeed *Peter* C, which was made by *Thirst*'s progenitors, Anthony Ginnane and William Fawcett. Happening as it does on the rich red terrazzo surface and the ravelled brow of Kate (Chantal Contourn) it fails to entertain as much as *Peter* did perhaps because it lacks the wondrous comic talents of Robert Helpmann as the mad doctor. The doctor in *Thirst* played by David Hemmings seems far from mad, more like your average family physician or a *Summer* form of television's Dr. Coonon.

A short rundown on the plot: Kate is an advertising executive in love with Derek, an architect ("I can't possibly see you or Kate. I have to finish these plans"). Dr. Fraser, Dr. Coonon (HARRY WILSON), Mrs. Barker (Shirley Cameron) and Mr. Hodge

(Miss Flanagan have got it into their heads and they may be right) that Kate is the descendant of the Barons von Karschner and that to keep the Hyena Brotherhood of blood-suckers going they need her for mating. That is with Hodge. They try to persuade her, then kidnap her, then humiliate her all the time keeping the screaming draughts of blood up to her. She almost, but not quite, escapes. Hodge masquerades as Derek, takes Kate on a picnic, and makes love to her on the river's edge (the Yarra?) in full view of some viewers. Adjusting his clothing he scratches off his false moustache and says "You have done me great honour". Kate screams a lot. Mrs. Barker sneers. Dr. Fraser looks awkward and Dr. Coonon demure.

Presumably David Hemmings was offered to give the film a name recognisable beyond these shores. Why *Henry VIII* was rejected from the US is another matter. Any Australian actor

could have done as well, or as badly, with the role of Dr. Coonon. Rod Muller, in the role of Derek, seriously registers. As played by Shirley Cameron, Mrs. Barker parodies every amateur housekeeper in British films.

Chantal Contourn is an interest alone. To put it tactfully, she is not one to let well alone. But over-enthusiasm, every gesture and expression. Her voice is unfortunately flat in tone and her diction such that audiences beyond Australia might have some trouble in understanding what she is saying. But then Australians often have trouble with overseas intonations.

The film is directed by Rod Hardy, written by John Pinkney photographed under the direction of Vincent Minton, with concepts by Bruce Mac. F. G. Productions financed *Thirst* with investment from the NSW Film Corporation and private cash. G. G. Film Distributors are handling Australian release.



David Hemmings and Chantal Contourn in *Thirst*

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(From page 12)

decorated that reach floor level

Costumes of the nobility are in jewel colours while those of the peasants are more or less in earth tones. The Countess and her ladies wear long gowns with ornate and wide butterfly-wing sleeves. Their headgear is high, either pointed or winged with trailing veils. The costumes of the nobles are very elaborate, the count wearing a quartered tunic with fleur-de-lis, wide banded sleeves and stockings of different colours, and his courtiers wear longer tunics richly decorated. The hats are flat with wide drapes to the shoulder. The men, of course, wear the lovely winged head-dresses that are like graceful birds taking to the air and typify French man, while the crusaders have costumes made in a fabric that simulates chain mail.

This is not the first time *Curse Of The Cross* has been produced in Australia but it is, as far as I can ascertain, the second. It was produced by Stefan Haug with the South Australian Opera Company for the opening season of the Adelaide Festival Theatre. Glyndebourne has given it two productions, one soon after the war designed by Oliver Messel, and the English National Opera did a production at Sadler's Wells and then at the Coliseum produced by Anthony Booth. "I didn't design that one," explains Rowell, "but it is his production that is being done by the VSO, and the director here, Hugh Halliday, was Booth's assistant and will stage it for the VSO."

*Curse Of The Cross* will open at the Princess Theatre as part of the joint season of the Australian Opera and the Victoria State Opera on February 27th. It will be sung in English and the orchestra will be conducted by the VSO's Musical Director, Richard Drull.

Kenneth Rowell is really better known in Australia as a designer for ballet — for the production of *Giselle* for the Australian Ballet reproduced by Dame Peggy van Praagh which won the Grand Prix of the City of Paris at the Third International Dance Festival, for *Coppelia* for the ex-ceremonial production of *The Sleeping Beauty* which was the opening ballet at the Sydney Opera House and for *Les Femmes d'Alger* but he prefers to be recognised for what he is, a designer for theatre of all kinds as well as ballet and opera.

# GUIDE

## ACT THEATRE

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O'Connell 18-26 January  
**REID HOUSE THEATRE**  
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Naseeb's Nose  
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Theatre 3 (47 4322)  
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## NSW THEATRE

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Ridgwell, with Sarah Aspinall and  
Steven Sacks Throughout January  
**BONDI PAVILION THEATRE**  
(30 7211)  
*Scots Mc Mother Dealer Touch Me*  
renature musical by Peter Batey and  
John Mulder Director Peter Batey,  
music John Mulder with Karen Johnson  
and Lu Harris From 22 January  
**ENSEMBLE THEATRE (529 9877)**  
*Amuck!* by David Hare, director Jon  
Dwyer, with Stephen Browne, Gloria  
Faye, Frank Gallagher, Pamela Gibbons,  
Paul Mason, Anne E Morgan, John  
O'Brien and Stanley Walsh  
Throughout January

**FIRST STAGE THEATRE**  
**COMPANY (83 1803)**  
*The History of Theatre in Dreams*  
Form by Gary Bainton directed by Chris  
Lewin with Angela Beattie, Damien  
Corrigan and Gary Bainton Touring to  
public institutions throughout January  
**FRANK STRAINS BULL NBUISH**  
**THEATRE RESTAURANT (357 4677)**  
*Thanks For The Memory* a musical  
review from the turn of the century to  
today, with Noel Murphy, Barbara  
Wyndon, Garth Meade, Neil Bryant and  
Helen Loran, director, George Carden,  
Until mid January  
**GENESIAN THEATRE (38 5647)**  
*Blithe Spirit* by Noel Coward, director,  
Tony Hayes, with Dennis Allen, Pat  
East and Anne Power Throughout  
January  
**HUNTER VALLEY THEATRE**  
**COMPANY, Newcastle (24 2326)**  
In rehearsal  
**KIRRIBILLI PUB THEATRE**  
(92 1413)  
Kirribilli Hotel, Milson's Point  
*The Mystery Show* by P P Company  
director, Richmond Young, music by  
Adrian Morgan, with Patrick Wood,  
Margo McCrene, Jane Hamilton, Paul  
Clubb and Rex Hobbes Throughout  
January

**LES CURRIE PRESENTATIONS**  
(338 2678)  
Mike Jackson, traditional bush music  
Sydney metropolitan area throughout  
January  
**LELUS THEATRE RESTAURANT**  
(357 8228)  
*The Jangle Show*, director Don  
Swanwell, with Anthony Martin,  
Michael Ross, Christine Woodland and  
Senna Taita Throughout January  
**MARIAN STREET THEATRE**  
(488 3185)  
Closed for renovations  
At St Albans Church Hall Lindfield  
*Star Struck Sea Shells* by Wendy Harland  
Childrens presentation from January 2  
to 13  
**MUSIC HALL THEATRE**  
**RESTAURANT (989 8323)**  
*Joe To The Devil* written and directed by  
Stanley Walsh, with Alexander Hay  
Tony Peck and Linda Cropper  
Throughout January  
**MUSIC LOFT THEATRE (977 6585)**

*Ros Amos* by John McKellar and Ron  
Fraser director Bill Orr, with Ros  
Fraser Throughout January  
**NEW THEATRE (519 3481)**  
*All My Sons* by Arthur Miller, director,  
Paul Quinn Commences early January  
*The Silver Sevens* by Mona Brand,  
childrens presentation from January 7  
to 19  
**NIMROD THEATRE 1699 3690**  
*Upstairs On Our Selves* by Bert  
Bakey adapted from the Steele Rudd  
books, director, George Whaley with Jon  
Blake, John Clayton, Don Crosby,  
Yvonne Gatten, Norm Hazelhurst,  
Robert McInnes, Barry Otto, Geoffrey  
Rush, John Smyke and Kerry Walker  
Until January 13 with possible extension  
On Clark Island: *Prisoners at the Barn* by  
Eleanor Whitcombe director, Neil  
Anfield Childrens presentation  
throughout January  
**PLAYERS THEATRE COMPANY**  
(30 7211)  
Bondi Fashion Theatre  
New production opens January 21 directed  
by Peter Batey Contact theatre for details  
360 PLAYHOUSE (829 8804)  
*Their Fabulous Years 1881-1887* created  
and devised by John Howitt based upon  
one of the original 580 name shows,  
director, John Howitt with John Howitt,  
Leanne Howitt, Bill Young, Jane Hamilton,  
Doug McDonald, Peter Parkinson and  
Anne Gipe Throughout January  
*Back to Belong, Along, Always* by Ron  
Warren, director, John Howitt Childrens  
presentation throughout January  
**Q THEATRE (447 21 5713)**  
*Grimes Farm Fable* by Michael Bond  
and Alfred Beadley director Di Drew  
Until January 26  
**THE ROCKS PLAYERS**  
(949 6254 6263)  
Ormeau Hall, The Rocks  
*The End of the Earth Show* by Slater  
Smith director, Anthony Barclay,  
Commences January 2  
St Patrick's Hall, The Rocks  
*Tout of Tout Hall by A Mine* director,  
John Daumert with Jeffrey Tinsman,  
Frank McNamara, Justin Byers and  
Joan Morgan Commences January 3  
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**SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE** (2 0588)  
Getting to Know About Drama Childrens presentation from January 7 to 25.  
**SYDNEY THEATRE COMPANY** (2 8588)

*The Swamp South* by George Dyer III director: Richard Wherrett with John Hargreaves, John Kennedy, Peter Carroll, George Sparrillo, Robin Ramsey, Ross Falk and John Gaden. Commences January 1.

**THEATRE ROYAL** (251 8011)  
*Travelling North* by David Williamson director: John Bell with Carol Rags, Frank Wilson, Jennifer Hagan, Julie Hamilton, Anthony Ingemann, Deborah Kennedy, Graham Knott and Henri Szeps. Commences January 4.

## OPERA

**THE AUSTRALIAN OPERA** (2 8588)  
Opera Theatre: Sydney Opera House  
*The Triumph of Honour* by Scriabin conducted by Richard Davall and produced by Franco Casella  
*The Alce* by Walton, conducted by David Karm and produced by Robin Lavery  
*The Pearlfishers* by Ruzic, conducted by Richard Davall and produced by Robin Lavery  
*Pavane* by Gilbert and Sullivan conducted by Geoffrey Arnold and produced by John Cox. Season commences January 4.

## CONCERTS

**BFGPNT THEATRE** (51 6465)  
Sydney International Music Festival January 14-19  
**SEYMOUR CENTRE** (492 8555)  
York Theatre: Sydney International Jazz Festival January 17-26  
**SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE** (2 8588)  
Concert Hall  
Festival of Folk Life January 11-20

For further contact: Carole Long on 317 2500/669 3370

## QLD THEATRE

**ARTS THEATRE** (16 2144)  
*The Murder Game* by Constance Cox director: Jason Savage. Continues to 9 February.  
**LA BOUTE** (16 1621)  
*Angus* by Edward Bond, director: John Minton (co-producer of TN Company) Commences 1 February.  
**QUEENSLAND THEATRE COMPANY** (221 5075)  
In review until February.

For further contact: Don Beshelton on 356 8311

## SA THEATRE

**ARTS THEATRE**  
Angus Street  
Flinders School of Dance and Drama  
*Once Upon A Muppet*, *Once Upon* pantomime written and directed by Jacoby Nell Jan 26 - Feb 9  
**FESTIVAL THEATRE** (51 0121)  
*Stone*, the musical, director: George Martin with Hayes Gordon, Jill Persman and Ann Gregg. Rex Horton and Kevin Johns Jan 7 - Feb 16  
**PLAYHOUSE** (51 5151)  
*And The Lady* by Michael Perrice director: Ted King, designer: Stuart Gordon with Molly Suggden Jan 16 - Feb 21  
**Q THEATRE**  
*Jack Be Good* by George and Ira Gershwin. To Jan 19. *Fire and Sun*. *THE SPACE* (51 0131)  
*Act One*, *McArth* by Grahame Bond and Jim Bennett, with Grahame Bond, Elizabeth Weller, Kim Cypsel, Graham Motters, Paul Johnstone, Biane O'Brien, Nick Lyon. Jan 10 - Feb 9

For further contact: Edna Bell on 223 8870

## TAS THEATRE

**SALAMANCA THEATRE** (23 5259)  
Richardson to early March  
**TASMANIAN PUPPET THEATRE** (23 7994)

In rehearsal  
**THEATRE ROYAL** (14 6286)  
Programme unconfirmed. Contact theatre for details.

For further contact: the Education officer on (089) 87 4475

## VIC THEATRE

**ALEXANDER THEATRE** (342 3920)  
*Brown and the Boys* by Barry and Phyllis director: Mark Canady. To Jan 26  
**AUSTRALIAN PERFORMING GROUP** (317 7130)  
*From Factory* - 4 Acts. *With Love*, the Shouting Band Jan 25 - Feb 1  
**COMEDY THEATRE** (863 4993)  
*Power Plays* by J.M. Barrie, director: Robina Brand with Hugh Maize and Sally Rosden  
**HOOPIA THEATRE FOUNDATION** (51 7471)  
*Lipstick Theatre* Judgements by Barry Collier Jan 25 - Feb 16  
*Documentary*, *Quadruphonia* by Ted Newbark. From late Jan  
**HER MAJESTY'S** (861 3211)  
*Lyric* with Peter Allen. From Jan 19 for three weeks  
**MINDHUNE THEATRE COMPANY** (858 4880)  
*Rosend/Norm Theatre*, *Once A Carols* by Mary O'Malley, director: Ron Lawing special return season to Jan 26  
*Directed* by Harold Pinter, director: John Sumner with Elizabeth Alexander, Neil Innes, John Houston and Edward Hoppel. Jan 30  
*Antennae* Theatre, *Concerto*, a pantomime for adults, director: Frank Hunter  
*Antennae 2*, *The Last Days of Alice* *Sachs* adapted by David Edgar director: Judith Alexander. From Feb 11  
*Alce* Youth classic. School Theatre Project and Curtain Up  
**MAJOR AMATEUR COMPANIES**  
Bass Theatre Group (782 1042)  
Clayton Theatre Group (878 4702)  
Hazelburg Rep (49 3265)  
Mabury Theatre Company (211 0120)  
Pompan Theatre (42 8217)  
Williamstown Little Theatre (328 4267)  
1812 Theatre (796 8442)  
**PIN GILIM PUPPET THEATRE** (818 8636)  
*Clint* in *Songs and Things* by Bart Cooper  
**MILL COMMUNITY THEATRE PROJECT**  
Mill Theatre, Pilkington St. Geelong (083 22 2114)

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Regular productions

## CONCERTS

PAIN IN THE ATRE (144 0475)

Admission: Adults in concert From Feb 2

## THEATRE RESTAURANTS

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Book Banquet

COMEDY CAFE, Farnes

Comedy

DURTY DICKS (126 3877)

Flourishman

FLYING TRAPZ (41 1727)

Original local entertainment

GAY NINETIES Greeting

Music Hall

LAST LAUGH

Variety productions

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West End style revue

NAUGHTY NINETIES (818 7567)

Music Hall

SHUTTYN (818 1840)

Irish style revue

STAGE DOOR (126 2541)

Warming revue

TIKKI AND JOHN'S (865 1745)

Vaudeville

For further details see *Live* cover right on  
76/777

## WA THEATRE

WIDE IN THE WAIR (181 2004)

Joseph Conrad *Covers* Adverse by David Allen, director Terry Clarke 21 January  
21 February

## CONCERTS

CONCERT HALL

Australian Day Free Concert: The WA  
Symphony Orchestra, conductor David  
Mackenzie with Greg Moore at the piano

For further contact Joan Aschworth on  
269 6636

## LETTERS

(From page 6)

Peters, Ted Noyens, Bill Head, Colin Ryan, Don Scott and Steve L Squares. To my knowledge the MTC has not produced works by any of these, so where is the duplication?

We have also presented plays by other Australian writers which the MTC wouldn't touch. When I was General Manager at the MTC I urged that Company to present the Nuremberg production of Ron Blair's *Christine* (directed by Melbourne, John said no, it was one of Hoopla's first successful entrepreneurial achievements at the Playhouse Theatre).

The importation of some of the most interesting work from other ages and companies is another of Hoopla's entrepreneurial impulses. For this and no less presented the Melbourne Theatre of Australia, the Tasmanian Puppet Theatre, the Victorian Puppet Theatre of China, the Nuremberg MTC (Shakespeare 400 to 450), *The Executioner's Theatre* (collecting the Victorian College of the Arts). How does that duplicate?

Hoopla's focus on the development of Australian writing led to the presentation of a wide range of new plays in the "Play in Progress" readings. The MTC responded to these (and to the nominations at Hoopla's Openair productions) supper shows (and with their own Liberator Productions). We don't complain of duplication because such response, in creative institutions is good for the whole theatre scene.

Hoopla also produces some of the most exciting contemporary theatre from overseas (and not power West End) by writers such as Heinerich Wehner, Sean Wilson, John Jones, Gilly Fraser, Peter Linklater, Aron Luper, David Mamet and Eric Moten. Brian's notion of Hoopla's programming is "the odd American small-scale musical". It "odd" means "different" and "idiosyncratic". Hoopla's highly successful *Amadeus* (last July) fits the bill.

Creative innovation is not a handful of money but of human spirit. This year (at the first time) we have produced genuinely innovative productions at a few (showing off John Jones) and directed by Roger Peters and Augustus and Weber (directed by Murray Clifford). Hoopla's attached variable school audiences who experience the theatre as a fresh, challenging force, not simply a well rehearsed and lyrical teaching tool.

Ironically, I recall John arguing that the Alexander Theatre in Melbourne

should not receive subsidies as it produced school syllabus plays. No doubt this argument would now be directed at Hoopla were it not for the fact that the MTC have themselves taken the market for the large-scale productions of plays on the English syllabus.

John accuses Hoopla of using the same creative people as the MTC. In fact we draw artists, directors, designers from the whole spectrum of the profession and some of these have of course worked for the MTC (or are invited to do so after Hoopla has given them prominence). They may also have worked for the MTC (e.g. Samer, La Marna, MFG and many more). This is the very nature of the theatre profession. One of our functions is to select alternative talent for employment at central artists in Melbourne. In the past the MTC and AIRC were mutually exclusive employers. Hoopla has helped break this pattern by opening its doors to all.

We believe in Australian artists. John said Harold Pinter's *No Man's Land* could not be done without Ralph Richardson and John Gielgud. Hoopla's high praise production, with superb local artists (as good as that famous fiction).

Because we believe in Australian artists as other members of Actors' Equity have addressed to Hoopla's main stage productions, I suggest to the MTC (and other companies) that this is a policy worth duplicating.

In a world that depicts details (there are actors excluded from the MTC by John's neo-preventive stance) I remember well a case when he overruled the casting choice of a guest director (and his Associate Producer) for purely personal reasons. But Hoopla is an honest theatre.

Hoopla is a tradition and a catalyst in the Melbourne theatre scene. This has been clearly recognised by the funding bodies who understand that standards are raised by a healthy diversity rather than by monopolistic smothering. We need partnerships like the MTC, we also need more companies and collaborators. Small craft like Hoopla (and their crews) do suffer from restricted resources, but they have the advantage of being flexible, imaginative and energetic. Creativity is not determined by stage dressing or the size of the director's salary. The collective theatre scene is small and fragile enough without the frequent assaults John regularly makes upon it. He would do well to duplicate the spirit of an operative good will shown undoubtedly by other members of his Company and which Hoopla tries to foster.

Seamus

Conrad Gumbrell  
Executive Director,  
Hoopla, Melbourne, Vic



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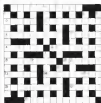
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### THESPIA'S PRIZE CROSSWORD NO. 19

Name

Address

16. Sounds like a lobby against space (10)
18. Gave a short fellow who follows others work (8)
19. Circus revolved in good line-running (16)
21. Confine to possession above (3,3)
24. One missing from NSW? (6)
26. The unreasonable philosopher and the economist join forces in providing security (8)
27. Transfiguration of the desecrated body into an archangel (14)
28. Persons in favour of the information I sort accurately (11)

#### Down

2. Secluded by removing the joels from the pond (14)
3. One Darwinian sea-bird caught and imprisoned (7)
4. Having a comedian to serve one is very fashionable (16)
5. With a crowbar, raising the First Lady's bed (10)
6. Release the French rose (7)
7. Piece of the bayonet planes (8,5)
8. Birds in tanks under the mass (8)
9. Clearly, any model poem was (11)
13. Electronics study via comb? (10)
17. Carousing the orphan you abandoned (8)
19. Mass spread with over-weighty quon and get someone's attention (7)
21. Sent to my — "With all my imperfections on my head" (Hamlet) (7)
23. Regardable as the snail? (6)
25. It's colder in the Arctic, I'm going discovered (11)

The first contest entry, drawn on January 1986 will receive one year's free subscription to TA. Last month's winner: The winner of last month's Crossword was Mr. A. J. Taylor, 32 Woodhouse Crescent, Ryde, NSW 2112.



#### Across

1. First mad and author (5,8)
10. Seal as little as possible (3)
11. Practical post loved photographic equipment (8)
12. Exaggeration of the snail or I confused (10)
13. Pipe away from the South, then skilled (14)
14. The game is all to do with blindness (8)